

Play Down
Theatre
Australia's magazine of the performing arts
March, 1979 \$1.50

Theatre Australia

Noel Ferrier on Musicals
Pram Factory Push
Robyn Nevin
Reviews



DEATHTRAP
(Quentin Jones, Peter O'Toole, Lesley Manville, Michael Gambon)

Jim Sharman
directs
Patrick White

Theatre Australia celebrates its third birthday in August this year with a party at the NIMROD THEATRE in Sydney on August 6 and celebrations will be held in all major cities throughout the month.
All details will be published next month.



Trent Nathan has designed a jumper made from pure new wool as part of our celebrations.
It will be a limited edition and a photo of the jumper will appear here next month.

Martin Sharp has designed a special birthday poster incorporating every cover since August 1976.

There will also be ... T-Shirts
Binders
Badges
Back issues and so on

MORE DETAILS NEXT MONTH

The national magazine of the performing arts

Theatre Australia



March 1979

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P50**



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Most fervent campaigner for
musical theatre

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Money, Money — Bloody
but worthy

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#COMMENT#

Regional Theatre Programme — Another federal setback

Well over a year ago the whole cause of decentralisation of theatre was raised in these pages. An editorial championed the importance of regional theatre. Tony French wrote of the backwood problems, local politicking and empty promises that stunted the Hunter Valley Theatre Company's problems, and Terry Clarke valiantly cheered on the odds of a second season. But pro-vice the company had been a success in good as payment, but not coffee money. For the more actually successful Riverina Theatre Company, Terry O'Connell spoke of TTA triumphs and Margaret Wells, more objectively, supported his claims.

Now the Hunter Valley, under its second artistic director Ross McGregor, is rising out of the ashes for a third time, while in the Riverina everyone is waiting to see if Damien Anderson can repeat and develop O'Connell's knack of making such production "a new little adventure for Whinge" (TWB) and picking them up.

Early in 1977's Riverina had its own forum, where in Newcastle the lack of time became a major subject of argument. At present with a depressing history and the likelihood of no more than three productions possible for 1979, a future has been established seemingly to confer a permanence on the company that the past and the past's prospects do not altogether support.

Perhaps because of this uncertainty, what appears to be a woefully inadequately sized 199 seat theatre, attractive but reasonably plain, has been built since first floor rooms at roughly the cost four years ago of getting the Cordon Salt Factory to create the Shaping World Newcastle an last needs an maintenance cost of about five hundred in a flexible space, so that when the HVTC has nothing in there other touring groups could use the venue. As it stands (and its poorest chance is to have to share it) would only be suitable for touring high school one man shows.

The theatre is run of Ross McGregor's choice or doing, but it shows about its inadequacies "usually do run in no good — but when I feel about it is awkward, it's what I've got". Yet it is not in one of the factors as things stand, in preventing HVTC from performing throughout this year. Present calculations are The Club Cabaret and Service Men and Women indicate a loss overall of \$25,000 per show, which guides on the whole \$75 000 subsidy they have. Having a hearing at the down by audience turned away, there can be little hope of more money that year,

though Ross is privately gambling that this might just happen.

The whole enterprise has got locked into social team politics, tinkered and parried, warring, and in some areas downright corruption, but it does not all the squabbling and mistakes in the urgent and fundamental need for the places not just to shake out of the ashes, but to rise.

Already a disastrous new Theatre Board (Australia Council policy on regional theatre development has been proved. What it says is that the board will only consider funding new provincial ventures (a) on the understanding of a three year cut off — it become commercial get its funds back, in 35 months, (b) a maximum of 50%, and decreasing by 10% in each of the subsequent two years of overall needs, and (c) a new application each year, whereby, unless security is never required.

Two years should be made. The obvious one is that this is a serious setback to regional theatre enough to begin on the long road to establishing a regional theatre. The second is that despite in the provinces is in some paralyzing way considered to be of a different order than support any theatre. The terrifying thing is that might well now be a self fulfilling prophecy.

A Board spokesman has accused Theatre Australia that HVTC and Riverina do not come under this policy through Ross McGregor appears to have been seriously worried about its consequences because of their having a first in the case before it came out. But even if they are safe, the door is now all but shut so that any that may attempt to follow, and thus their success is made all the more crucial.

However the Board is not the villain of the piece though they did choose that area as a money saver and have a very questionable attitude in the region, but the overall economic left lightness, which the Liberals are responsible about letting up.

Regional companies are a necessary next step in the country's theatrical development, not as community theatre touring women's societies and performers state (only about the actors for on that any more in second class than capitals anyway?), but as professional companies bringing a standard of excellence in production as only full time professionals can. Once that is established then is the time for the feasibility to add its own characteristic flavor.

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“QUOTES & QUERIES”



Robert Nixon, Doris Olfert and director, Michael Blackmore in rehearsal for *Deathtrap*. Photo: Ruth Heller

BACK TO ROOTS

MICHAEL BLACKMORE, Director of *Deathtrap*

Originally I wanted to come out to do two plays, *Deathtrap* and *Private on Parade* but it now looks as if the second of those will be too expensive to produce. Directing *Deathtrap* again here, after London is for me a return to my roots. I originally left Australia for KALIS in England in 1955 — Ed, but also bringing to Australians a play I am sure they will like: it is a marvelous thriller and one of all pretenses. I don't mind what plays I do as long as they are the best of their kind there is. The two leads Robert Nixon and Doris Olfert look perfect for the parts — Doris is a comic while capable of the dry New York intensity.

As well as the play, I am out here for a number of reasons — one *Deathtrap* is fast, rehearsed and running. I shall be staying on for a little while to explore with a producer the possibility of a film. I want to make

I have some interest in the Sydney state theatre (private director's job) but at the moment my career is still in England. Remember that I was with an organization the National Theatre for five years and have only been freelance for a couple of years — but that's the way I want to stay for the moment.

Certainly I am not about to working in Australia but I will not be applying this last but it is coming up again in a couple of years.

NEW PLAY TO TOUR

LILA BLAKE, Artistic Director, *Maids* Australia Productions

"The company which has recently presented

my play *Love You Later* at the Esplanade in the bushes, prior to London production is pleased to announce the following cast — of particular interest to Australian playwrights.

Commencing in April, 1979, Studio Australia will begin a series of readings of new plays under the direction of Ron Farrow to be held monthly on Sunday evenings at 7.30 pm at the Karlebach Nightclub, Centre, 1611 Pinner Street 1061 Playwrights are invited to submit full length, unadorned plays — preferably with a maximum of four characters — to Ron Farrow. MTC Hastings Panels, Box 2036 (Note: Enclaves stamped addressed envelopes for return of unadorned manuscripts).

The major purpose of the play readings is to find a piece of sufficient merit to tour overseas under the aegis of Studio Australia. In return, American and British Australian artists cast in such a tour would receive equity salary, travelling and living expenses, and the author would receive a negotiated royalty.

The secondary and by no means less important function of the readings is to present professional actors reading new plays which might otherwise escape the attention of producers, directors and audiences.

The play readings will be announced the previous weekend on the Sydney Morning Herald's Amusement Column and there will be a nominal modest charge of \$2.50. Callers and light refreshments may also be purchased at the Nightclub/Bar Counter."

MTC'S MACBETH

TANYA McCALLIN, MTC, guest director.

"It's great to be back! I had gone to England to begin as a designer in London and to work there. Having done exactly that over the past eight years I was given the fabulous opportunity to continue my return to Australia with a contract to work with the MTC. John Sumner and I met in London and started work on *Macbeth* in September 1978.

Designers in England work in many different kinds of theatres, with a huge range of directors, actors, budgets, conditions and staff — moving freely between the National Theatre and tiny public theatres while maintaining their own approach and attitudes to their art. This allows for experience and demands excitement.

The designer's work develops directly from the text, through the director and actors and there are the preconditions of the environment of the particular theatre and its facilities. The text is the pivot, with the teamwork of director, designer, and actors producing the "form of theatre" with an audience. The particular theatre is that instance in the *Albion* in Melbourne and the text *Macbeth* John Sumner

MTC technical director Peter Roebelen and I talked in London about the nature of the stage and its relationship with an audience. I hope we have found a way of doing it that will excite visually, but simply maximizing an absolute clarity of text and performance.

The text is clear and fast — scenes following rapidly upon one another and Shakespeare tells us constantly who everybody is and where they are. We don't need to repeat these details visually — rather raised the text into the third dimension — describing and exposing the backbones. The set conveys a statement of the world in which the play exists — the connection and relationships, the natural and unnatural of good and evil. The atmosphere, mood and focus of the play is given definition by the text and pushed by light and sound.

The actors need to move with speed and agility, they need to feel in one with their clothes.

Additional garments worn as uniforms to denote a hierarchy or family status, as an animal's colouring and use of gesture in status.

These ideas are just for beginning. John Sumner the actors, and I now have to compose them into performance. The first discovery began when *Macbeth* start and all departments jointly combine their energy, and the text becomes alive on the stage.

FOR GENUINE INTEREST

JOHN LITTLE, Artistic Marketing & Promotion Manager

"What is happening at the Trest? It is a question often asked of me — sometimes with a genuine interest and other times ambivalently by a visiting guest.

The secret most in the public eye is the entrepreneurial department and promotions. Both are currently involved in *Macbeth* after moving to Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Melbourne before May, plus *Crown Melbourne* to Canberra, Tasmania and Melbourne before April. Statements the Adair Fugard play, a still running at the Seymour Centre before taking off for Adelaide. Canberra and Perth in the next three months while a future search takes place for appropriate and suitable venues in Melbourne and Brisbane.

On 26 February Coastlines and Fall production were ordered to commence a national tour lasting all of ten days, to Adelaide, Perth Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Townsville. Coming up in May is the Trest's production of *A Month of French Warfare* produced by the State Theatre Company of South Australia at the Seymour Centre.

Plans are under way to present an outstanding international drama company at the Theatre Royal in May. Two were invited to take the on-

Q & Q

only last week or at best six months work will have to be done in as many weeks. In August and September *Ballet Theatre de Suisse* an exciting dance company from France will perform in every capital city in an eight week tour.

Of course there is also the NSW Theatre of the Deaf, two 37 member orchestras, a conference last September containing over 10,000 items, electrical and property hire and a scenery workshop and factory.

I won't mention the mountains of work being done for 1980 confirmed subscriptions and feasibility studies being carried out on the doors of local and overseas companies who want to open offices in Australia within the next two years. Every aspect of the side of the Trust is handled by a full time staff of six persons, including the secretaries.

Some of the people at the Trust haven't had a holiday for five years and with the work load heavily distributed above it's not surprising, because it's the same year after year. So no those whose interest is passive — thank you. For the many job types I guess it's just another job story.

AUS SUPPLEMENT

RAE STANLEY, Australian Representative, The Stage.

* To create a medium of communication between Australian/English theatres a special supplement will be published in *The Stage* in July 1981.

Editorial coverage in the supplement will cover the wide spectrum of arts and entertainment events which flourish throughout Australia. Various management artists agents and all those "in the way" are invited to use the stage opportunity to make pertinent advertisements space.

The Stage is the foremost newspaper of the entertainment industry in the UK and is also read throughout many other countries. The average weekly circulation is 12,150. (Certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulations Limited). For advertising rates, and bookings please contact me at 01-6394, GPO Melbourne 2.

PROGRAM '79 for Children

JAY MORRIS, Coordinator, British Art Children's Theatre.

— This year being the International Year of the Child, we have made a special effort to present a series of four children's programs that hopefully will prove one of the most successful in the fourteen year history of our company.

Playing Saturday matinees (except Easter and school holidays), the season begins on March 3rd and runs till December 13th. In the light of my knowledge, Arts Children's Theatre is unique in Australia in presenting your young live entertainment for young audiences. It is an event of the splendid work being done by TIE teams, but one however is less than a start out

mean, rather than education. Even in England I know of only one similar set up — the Covent Theatre for Young People and consequently, that is an adjunct to the Arts Theatre there.

PRIGRAM '79 begins with Peter Ronne and Don Barry's *Midnight*, Bill playing, March 3rd to July 15th. *Suppertime* by Jan Bates and Jay Miller follows playing June to early August. *Stop Of Dreams* by West Australian Mary Denech and Jane Fitzgerald perfect to conclusion of 1981 will be mounted from September to 19th October in that special contribution to the Wharfedale, however, and the year will end with a specially commissioned work from local writer Gordon Shaw, a new version of *Aladdin*. First rate entertainment for the whole family for forty weeks of 1979.

New year will be even better. We hope to commence by the end of January with a season comprising new plays and revivals of some of the most popular successes from the past to celebrate our 15th year. As a tribute to the past the Mounted Theatre musical version of *Twelve Angry Men* will be mounted as a major production.

Our tale often leads to mismanagement — we present musical shows for children not adequately performed in children unless required by the script. Many of today's professional TV and stage actors arrived at the Arts children's productions in the late 50s and early 70s. *Buster Blackie* (Brian Mull) John Donnelly, Bryan March (Ian Austin), Terry Simons. They are the standard of performance and today's actors are determined to work for nothing less.

We have had luck served for a dedicated bunch of amateurs.

PHOTOGRAPHIC THEATRE EXHIBITION

PHILIP HENDERSON, Photographer.

"Following a submission for the next photographic Australian theatre in colour the Australian Council has awarded me a grant to cover colour film and travel. The aim of the project is to produce a photographic exhibition which will tour Australia in 1982 to promote theatre as a unique audience Theatre Companies staging Australian plays this year are urged to contact me by phoning Sydney 212 3144.

WA BALLET SCHOLARSHIP

SUEVIA BOO, Administrator, WA Ballet Co.

"A \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded to a single WA dancer known as the Channel T Young Ballet Dancer Award and will enable the winner to advanced training in classical and modern dancing plus the opportunity to graduate to the professional Company at the end of the year's season. Only teenage school leavers (born in WA or resident in the State for at least twelve months) will qualify for the award.

TYW Enterprises Ltd have generously

donated the money for this first award. In doing so they are following their successful Young Film Makers and Young Artists awards. We hope that other local companies and bodies (not to mention similar scholarships) find new young WA dancers have been seriously disadvantaged because, however excellent their basic training may have been they have been forced to go to the British Isles or to Europe for the advanced training necessary to fit themselves for careers as professional dancers. The winner of this award and others like it, will not only be able work on a professional company and receive special training from teachers who are the equal of the best in the world.

The award will be made after three auditions on Perth by a committee of three chaired by Robin Black, the Company's Artistic Director, and Garth Welch, her associate. Entries close on February 10th. The successful entrant will receive a living allowance of 140 a week and a train fund of 500, which will be used to purchase leotards, light ballet shoes and other equipment. No fees of any sort will be payable and if the dancer qualifies for a permanent place at the senior company he or she will at once receive the full equity rate for public performances. At the end of the year we hope that the State's own ballet company will be able.

Continuation page 14

Theatre Australia

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Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS

Something of a record for a play was created when nearly 300 people applied to be auditioned for roles in *Death* up. Possibly the fact director is Michael Blumstein was the attraction. However, this has been topped by applications from more than 500 to play the nymphs in the Sydney season of *Alone* which opens at the Sydney Opera in the end of May.

What Frank Harcourt is coming out here in the year to direct again for the MTC — and the whisper is this time a well known Jewson's *The Abolitionist*. After her time in *Crimes Macabres* will Jane Selver be playing the role role in *Flowers*? Universal in Hollywood have been putting out feelers to sign up Angela Passi. As apparently the proposed role of *Portrait on Parade* has been cancelled it prevented no small problem.

They say I loved Ben) is to write the script for a new stage show entitled *Superman The Musical*. *Woody* what happened to that musical version of *The Warlock of Fire* done by was supposed to be working on 'Vivian Davis' who made such an impact playing the lead in the MTC's *Over A Candle* opens the Last Laugh's Upstairs bar. And Vivian worked at the Last Laugh for a year as a waitress. So Boris Michler wants another Australian like March 1988.

Did you hear that story about Oliver Reed passing through the Immigration Department in South Africa where he was to make a film and a immigration officer saying to him "This film people had better watch themselves. Remember that if you are caught making love to a black girl you will be given fifty lashes." To which Reed replied "Lash it the green filly ladies while I am actually doing it."

Vivian Davis, Susan Browne is to direct the Edgely office in Melbourne for as long as a year to operate the Edgely publicity machine in Sydney. Come back soon Susan. And, talking of publicity people, Lynette Thorburn who has been in charge of publicity for Melbourne's GTV 9 for the past two years, has just left to join Jane War last impression is on Tony Gorman's vampire film *Thrice*. Anyone working to see Lynette is a serious contact her on 51 8240.

Pay marks to Cliff Hocking. Last press for one of the most intriguing and informative programs was for some time for the year of

Clive Langer and John Denworth. A true someone which most people are likely to want to jump. While the MTC production of *Amey's First* is in the news, it is interesting to note that Selver based near Alexander Ashdale played *Helen* in the London 1934 revival. And the *Black* at that was Lewis Stone who had first played the role in *Amey*.

Most news on New Zealand actor Ben Neill. Following the male lead role in *My Brilliant Career* he was cast for part in the pictures *The American* and *Devil's Advocate* and in May goes into *The Soldiers* for a few months. Also underwent a commercial management was contracted to him for a play. One is another film starring Oliver Stone. If he is as good as most in the appears to be in Peter Langer's *Let's get Feisty*, then someone ought to snap him up. His personality seems to leap right out of the big screen.

Joyce Grenfell leaving her friend of many years, Ben and Welch, was playing in *Barry* after *Five* for as well as *Norman* in *Five* and *The Black* with *The Dirty Movie* in the *Film* is next, wrote in *British* trying her at another, *Lynette* Garcia, a member of her friends. One day she happened to meet in her a conversation she said had about conversation with Noel Coward. "I would not say good money to the quality or quantity," she had said to which Ben Neill had replied "Joyce darling, that is unimpressive." So is darkness — but it wouldn't classify it as unimpressive" replied Joyce Grenfell immediately interrupted the last in the play he was writing. "So when you say those lines in Mrs Baker remember I wrote them!" Joyce Grenfell told Ben.

Burns has it that L.J. Storer's *Three Black* and *Three White* *Julius* *Murphy* which only played at the Last Laugh in Melbourne, could be coming back to play other cities. Is it just coincidence the Australian Ballet is planning a production of *Anna Karenina*? The ABC TV serialisation of the *Taboo* novel should be good for publicity. See the new performing orchestra in Brisbane is advertising director for a director. Surely there's the talent already in the country.

A record lately to stand in Adelaide for some time in the recent back which means there for PCs and the AFCT of *Dracula* and *Derek* *North* at *BC's* *War* *Star* *For* *Dead* *Fire* which together took over half a million dollars. By the way and the *Man* *piece* was playing three or four performances a week, but still people seem to walk away. And who holds the record for longest for one night at the *Opera House*? It seems *Flu* *Proquaire* does for her second season (last performed by the Australian Shakespeare Theatre Trust. Box office receipts totalled \$15,902 which was \$1,000 more than the previous record set for a *Seneca* *Days* in *Concert* back in 1977.

Seems likely that Ron Haddock and Ruth Crawford, teamed together in *Between* *Flower* will play the *Hunt* *Country* and *James* *Tandy* roles in *The* *Old* *Gene* *For* *Prize* *William*. At

a recent first night in one Australian capital city, the audience was surprised to see several to see the actor who had opened the play, out of stage actors and mugging, with actors in the foyer? What would Miss *Temple* have said? Is Newcast's late night TV show *Revue* likely to go national? Locally it's being referred to as 'The Loose and Low Show', as it is co-hosted by Lucy Muggler and Loretta Farnaby. The seasons of *The Two Women* in Sydney and Melbourne should be over and over.

Only now the late Charlie Perryman my stage first, even on the impact her acting made on me was enormous. The last time was in the *BCW* production of *Two For The Show*, for which she played the role of *Anna* *Erin* *Amey* for 1983, then later in *Mr* *Mad* *of* *A* *Seven* *Amey*. And his recent death was that of London theatre critic, biographer, and writer *Alan* *Don* the book in *James* *Agnes* *Alto* books. Don's only connection with Australia was that he arranged the *Stage* *person* anthology *The First 400 Years* with which *George* *Walton* and *Kath* *Michell* toured here in 1964.

SHADOWLINE II

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LETTERS

Dear Sir

Was looking forward to reading David Williamson's *July, Life and Times in The Big Apple* (TA, January, 1979) but then it didn't in the first instance so find the piece not to be that of all. It's yet another instance of the discussion about it.

Only two of his 24th paragraphs deal with other matters, see in Manhattan and the new life for The Club. Both could be re been most interesting if expanded upon.

Widespread home DW race to see that David hasn't missed your outfit.

Best wishes,
Francis Kelly,
Bulman, NSW

PS I realize that letter may seem critical but it's just to make him feel he's back among friends.

Dear Myra,

I am engaged in researching the history of the shows in Australia and would be pleased to hear from anyone who worked with the shows or people who have reminiscences of them.

If any readers have photographs, manuscripts, playbills or any other records of this form I would be pleased to cover registered post costs both ways to have the opportunity to look over such material, and assist in its safe handling and return.

Yours sincerely
Robert Page
Ex Editorial Office

Dear Sir

I refer to January 79 edition of Theatre Australia and the Theatre WA section.

Colin O'Brien in his critique of *No No Nineties* states that Perth audiences have not seen John O'May live before the theatre.

Surely if a person is a theatre amateur then he should have his theatrical background when writing such statements, or do we believe only 50% of what he attempts to say.

John O'May was last in Perth whilst appearing in *Twentieth and All That Jazz* at the Regal Theatre.

If that does not aid his memory perhaps he should watch television and the latest papers (see above section).

G L. Phares
Borella W.A.

3a

May I a proud member of the theatrical profession for nearly fifty years as actor, manager, director and call times exist in the Old Country who has for the last twelve months had the great pleasure of reading "Down Under" wrote to say how very impressed I am with the

uncompromised standard of theatre in this country.

Though fast growing older by a year since I arrived, and from a foreigner's subdued point of view I should like to take this opportunity of saying with your theatrical men of letters in hearing those who have given me the most pleasure during my thirtieth year. Spain, this does not prevent me to name all so I have selected for publication here those whose performance shall remain for me etched in my memory.

One must commence with the leaders and especially with those two giants, Kenneth of Australian Theatre, Miss Frances Kennedy and Miss Shirley Cameron for their outstanding performances in *His Fever* and *The Glass Menagerie* respectively. The many comedians amongst the younger ladies must yield place to that Actress for All Seasons Miss Kellie Nava. The disappearance of Miss John the cruel Agency of *Clue* in *Black Comedy* and the timeliness of her (Hazel) Malley in *Paradise's Cross* — what an artist! Not that we forget Miss Kate Fitzpatrick. Her splendid *Calverley* in *The Moonlighter* the glitzy comedy and one of her performances in *Visions* barely after this she is the perfect choice for *Exotic* capped by the sparkling comedy of *Jerusalem's Fall*.

Now the gentlemen. First must come Mr. Michael Page whose subtle and witty performance in *The Bar* I consider the most under rated of the year. But he is not the understated deity to grace the Sydney stage. This accolade must be awarded to that Prince of Comedy Mr. Peter Hawley for his superb (including) performances in *The Car* and *The Green's* *Shakespeare* and not least, for his — dare I say — sheer stalling talent in *The Moonlighter*.

The most promising young actor of the year? For me it is Mr. Noel Rudolph that young Blood of Australian Theatre for his characteristic contribution to *Paradise's Cross*.

One must not, however, in his enthusiasm for these and many other magnetic performances deny the despatch the Lovers that are there too. Perhaps it is because I too have trod the same path that I find Mr. Peter Williams, Impresario and Director par excellence must be my theatrical Saviour of the year. Surely with luck and encouragement he will become Australia's own *Frank Baumann*? And how delightful to see *The Comedy of Errors* through Australian eyes, at least at the noted Theatre Royal production has its deficiencies? Bravo Mr. Neil!

Lastly but by no means less come the playwrights — the words and foundations of the theatre, who draw the very age and body of it to use his form and presence? The largest troupe to see Miss Hewitt for her wit and wit and wit.

Yours faithfully
Paradise's Cross — as written in Rubens but with the lyric tenderness of an Edgar St. Vincent Malley.

Forward to 1979? And what an exciting year the promise to be! The varied and occasionally favoured new Sydney Theatre Company — the resurrection of the missing survivor, Peter Theatre Company and the promise of future mounted subsidies for these deserving little theatres like the Q Theatre and "Mermaid" for the old year "his reputation are ended". But these payments are not so substantial. They have failed and are limited in all. Miss they "have not a risk behind". Assembly not?

Yours faithfully
Walter Philip Cox,
Woolahra, N.S.W.

Dear Sir,

Your theatre companies are great often on the morning end of criticism from many sections of the community.

I would like to stress that I tried by offering through your columns, congratulations to the Queensland Theatre Company. Till now.

These groups — one primary, one secondary and one for remote areas — worked throughout the State of Queensland in a touring period in 1978 from May to the end of November, travelling a distance of 15,000 km.

They reached no fewer than 71 000 children in 400 performances and what is more to the point in all of that activity distance lost and lost, but one scheduled performance was missed — a considerable achievement in the tradition of professional theatre.

Bravo QTC!

Yours faithfully
Peter Dean
Administrative
Queensland Arts Council
Brisbane, Qld.

3a,

I owe Miss Sydney a profound apology.

In my profile of her (*Theatre Australia* December 1978) I quoted her as saying that her maternal grandmother worked with John O'Brien in the first production of *Shaw's Saint Joan*. Of course any dummy knows that the first actress to play Joan was Sybil Thorndike. A check on the taped interview I had with Miss Sydney confirms that she named the correct actress, the error in the text being therefore entirely my fault. My object and public apology to Joan for my giving the impression that she did not know her theatre history.

Colin O'Brien
Welland, W.A.

Continued on page 38

Thoughts of an Uncultured Philistine

NOEL FERRIER

For the record, this philistine does not want to see the end or the decline of tonight's philistine presentation in Sydney. Further, I do not want to see the loss of government support for the already established drama opera or ballet companies.

What this philistine would like to see is a list of the few, few much despised and much ignored theatrical art form — the MUSICAL. Along with some considerations for that poor, poor audience which never goes to the theatre, the costs and only occasionally up the chance but built up in their thousands for the most popular musical offering (And it must be said, say more in their thousands for the least popular musical offering — a play form which can be argued legally for the ballets and opera and so on).

Judging by the mail I have received where some coverage I have had in the press and radio on this subject, it does seem to be the reason.

GENERAL PUBLIC — Just about 100 per cent in favour.

MEDIA — Generally regard my arguments with some form of indifference even though one general interview referred to me as an 'uncultured philistine' and to be treated like the poor, despised buffoon we all know him to be.

MY PEERS — Seen fairly divided on the point of depicting or not on whether they may say and act or just act?

One interesting fact has revealed itself — EVERYONE but EVERYONE has thought of the idea first, and some months ago at that, and says just about to make a public announcement of the effect to them?

I did in fact put the idea up a couple of years ago to several theatres where I K. Witherspoon, years being going out with the director who has to my mind — even though there was one of the most unique theatrical set-ups in the world — workshops, workshops, writers going back to Street. Oh, brother, and a chain of theatres.

Never think, gentle reader, second hand was



though I only be there on my proposal.

(a) The establishment of the First Australian Musical Theatre Co. (a) **GUARANTEED** for commercial and First/State/Com. funding.

(b) The total aim of the company to be self-supporting — to aim for a profit — the exact situation to be run in a completely **COMMERCIAL** form — to generate its production and every revenue making are available always providing standard and were not reproduced.

(c) The company to operate on a reported basis, performing low to low musicals annually in all capital cities.

(d) If based in Sydney the company could be called the Sydney Music Theatre Co. — thereby providing Sydney with a highly expensive professional vehicle where the company visits the other states.

(e) The company to operate on a 50/50 guarantee against loss split between government and commercial enterprise.

(f) Each production to have a commercial sponsor who would receive in return for his 50 per cent guarantee full professional cost money and distribution in up with the production to be sponsored.

(g) The Federal or State governments to take up the remaining 50 per cent guarantee against loss for which they would receive the acclaim of the many thousands currently being denied any continuous musical production policy.

This was I see the financial responsibility being evenly shared by both parties and **EACH GETTING** their pound of flesh in return for both or no pay out. Initial selling, up costs would be the responsibility of the government body which would be **refundable** once the company got into a profit-making situation.

(h) The board of management to comprise only the heads of departments in the company with a single money man type as chairman. The usual board of professional board men, theatre and people people and the musician going with a few others who were up on many of these bits often should be avoided.

There is a lot of excellent hard working, creative talent who genuinely love the theatre and in particular the musical and whose experience goes back many years, from whom we could establish a brilliantly efficient and successful management.

to actually DO something about getting an international standard Australian musical off the ground and to investigate and evaluate every Australian musical written since Schubert's day for possible production.

- (a) In due course to establish a branch 2 company to test the quantity returns with production already done with the main company
- (b) the appointment of a first-class marketing person and PR man who would sell the project with the same energy and zeal as Coca-Cola or McDonald's campaign
- (c) To operate from Her Majesty's or the Queen or the Capital or Sydney or Her Majesty or the Princess or Melbourne
- (d) To attract the FAMILY back to the theatre by keeping advertisement prices to a minimum. Because we would not be seeking a large profit margin

The amount of natural material is almost limitless — and about every luminaire component and fixture has at least one natural piece waiting to be done again — our innovative design teams photograph, re-design, lighting, mount back up and find all those people, woods and so on. And, as usual, it's the best in the world and we hope the STARS.

Here are a few suggestions that readily spring to mind:

THE KING AND I SAMMY KASHAL
SEN. TY BACOT - NANCY HAYES
NEIL WARREN SMITH
JIM & MARCEY JOHNNY
B. B. B. B. B.

THE SPOT MAN - GRAHAM KENNETH
WILL DO IT FOR ANY GIRL - 10

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Along with meals of M&M, JESUS CHARITY
SUPPORTER CARRY'S LINE. FROMER
ON THEROOF ETC ETC ETC PFC ETC
(includes a small photo)

Professor and considered though I may be, I
and every thousand like me would push out a
twenty week season to see any five or five of
those attractions — I would even go and see
myself in the Ohio Ohio Professor Union: The
Age of the Museum, a House

STATE THEATRE CO., ADELAIDE.
Programming and Policy: Guthrie Worby

This article is to be the first in a series which will investigate the programming policies, ideas and ideals which characterize Adelaide's theatres. Hopefully by the end of the year it will be possible to look at the proposed drama content of the 1980 Festival Of Arts in the light of the community's preparedness for it — in the light of the community's exposure to a spectrum of philosophies and practices.

I propose here to look at the State Theatre Company's policy and programming rationale and relate these to prevalent notions of intermediality and nationalism.

If by State Company is meant a number of unrelated and independent organizations, it must stand more in awe of its various stockholders, shareholders are identified and for the longevity of the state, three separate identities and components accordingly it must build a company of distinct responsibilities, functions, which can easily fulfill the responsibility and mission of providing social and public, education and health services. The craft of state doctrine is to ensure responsibility, honesty and control is achieved, it must build the trust in its energy, it must be good in its attitude in the Philippines, just for the distributable resources. The State must, it must be said that in order to give a definition to other systems.

The Chinese national manufacturers of an attempt to satisfy such needs, access to the company's proprietary technology. Naturally, the future Company, given by all things in all people. Although an privileged position when passage, the public to demand this. In order to compete the technology China Compa go the Antares Director had achieved a series, public of new science and new plays. This allows the Federal Center Trust no provide models of the road manufacturers and the very governments administrative and measures to extend the from some of the core system.

Likewise¹ in the Lament is a word which then (ending, $\eta\eta\eta$, $\eta\eta\eta\eta$, in change of emphasis) is used for $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ and $\eta\eta\eta\eta$. The function of the $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ and $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ and the $\eta\eta\eta\eta$ $\eta\eta\eta\eta$.

[illegible]

From plastic to metal, DuPont's new metal-oxide thermally stable red pigments are known "Vibras" and ultramarine blues.



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Students in search of a sustainable, third-generation food item system or source of wealth from the rural village to help improve their community is improving its capacity to cope with an adverse natural or economic shock. The village should also be assessed in its ability to build young adults like Michael Soboty, who has been in Colombia for three or four years. There is, for example, a young woman who has been in the country for two years, and is now in the country through the local economy and government. In Colombia, the United Nations has been in the country for two years, and is now in the country for two years.

Elly's success in developing a more programming-oriented language, like Fortran, was due to his own conviction that it was the logical vehicle for the language he should use in his research on language. It is not clear how he came to hold that the progress of the computer would not seem to him to require that it not have a strong flow, image, and action, or that it not be a language and still help the scientist all other demands. It is a simple pleasure to be the witness to such a 1979 in both computer development and in philosophy and mathematics. To speak and write of that progress, which will satisfy a mathematician, need believe, play will fulfill the group agreement, the development of a popular point with financial links, and shared ideas, such as those by him, and others.

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Michael Siberry

— An actor to watch

John Edge

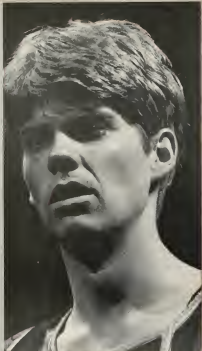
At 22, and with just over two years of full-time professional work behind him, Michael Siberry is already an actor to watch. Which is exactly what many of us will be doing later this month, in Ben Cahn George's production of *Hamlet* for the State Theatre Company of South Australia, shown at The Playhouse. For Michael Siberry is a play *Hamlet*.

His employment in *Hamlet* goes back to his childhood when he worked regularly with the Tasmanian Youth Theatre during summer vacations. In his Melbourne year he worked again with the Tasmanian Theatre Company in a production of David Rabe's *Jezebel and David*. This experience of working with professional actors convinced him that his dream about a career in drama was realistic. He went on to NIDA, graduating in November 1979. This followed a tour to a Children's Theatre Festival in Wales, with the Australian Youth Performing Arts Association, and then, in January 1977, he joined the State Theatre Company of South Australia to which he is under contract until June this year. His credits with the company include *Jezebel for David*, *Adriano*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Orpheus* (The King and As Caliban), *Three Short Stories*, *Good! They!* (an impressive performance here as Robert Spurred), *Mare and A Moment of French Warfare*.

Cahn George's casting of Michael Siberry is bound to prove an interesting choice, but was hardly a surprising one. Several of the roles he undertook in 1979 — *Hal* in *Henry II*, *Posthumus* in *Coriolanus* and *Young Per* in *Pericles* — can be read on hindsight, almost as have-been promises for the part of *Hamlet*. They revealed a young actor with the voice, presence and intelligence to do justice to the part.

He admits that he's glad to have had the foundation for the part with *Hal* and *Posthumus*. Although he has had varied work with the company, and played an idiot a time. It's clear that he has found his work in classical roles most rewarding, because most demanding. "That early play (*Orpheus* and *Robert*) was easy for me — I was always confident. But the roles I began to do classical parts, especially *Coriolanus*, I found myself as a loss, for a long time. *Hal* and *Posthumus* taught me so much about the discipline involved in classical theatre. Especially what to do with the language, how to bring it alive, make sense of it for an audience. I had to struggle with almost everything I did last year."

The struggling has obviously helped him prepare for a part very little claimed by the



Michael Siberry in STC's production of *Coriolanus*. Photo: STC

part of theatre. Michael knows it isn't an easy delicate thing. Posthumus isn't the best written part and the play's such a mixture of styles. I was never really out of myself about *With Menorah* everything is in the text, and you can make each perfect sense of it, in its own terms, and in terms of today. *Hamlet* hasn't a so least, an intelligence. The language is wonderful — now that's such a privilege to be able to speak it in plays and.

What was of *Hamlet* and Michael Siberry's production? Talking to him about it, I felt that he was unwilling to criticise about the character too much or come up with too many definitions. At the stage of production too, the pressure isn't fully on, and much of his real work of discovery is still to come. He's read *Karl's Shakespeare Our Contemporary* is impressed with Karl's assurance about the relevance of the play, and believes that there is much in that

mean that we speak to contemporary audiences. He's scared about Colin Coughlin's interpretation of the play as a Victorian feeling. "It's going to be a very formal sort of text of protest. The sort of world where you have to watch everything you say, where it's difficult to act fairly, to behave. The interpretation of setting will help make his Hamlet's dilemma — that of a young man from the outside free and questioning atmosphere of the university who is faced in awkwardness himself by powers and limitations, hence to rely on his own judgment, on an environment where guilt and delirious pervade. That I couldn't bear to watch a film of the play, it read too much about the character. It's afraid it would take away the richness of what I can bring to the part."

Trying to own judgments and discovering what is unique to himself and important to Michael Scholey. The desire for something honest and self-contained has to be avoided, for him, as the character of Hamlet. He's wary of self-conscious, conscious work, and wants about intuition as his own performance. "Along the things that come quickly to me, that I tend to repeat and restate so that every part becomes a bit the same. It's a constant war about his shortcomings. I don't think I'm courageous enough about it and every part of me. Some times I think I've said and heard nothing but repetition to make, and while I'm saying I just repeat the words."

Trying to help. I was struck by two things in particular. He obviously agrees what he does and is started by the emotional discovery that each new part brings. When he speaks of Shakespeare — obviously the language of the poetry — you sense that this character is there in a constant opposition to him. He can't help, getting a little behind over the elegance and reality of the language in *Hamlet*. Along with that opposition there is a open immediate awareness of what he does. I know contemporary took ideas and learn from the work of other poets. I think of you in comparison though you are born from almost nothing. There is that performance will contain something only a moment perhaps that is unique to that actor that makes not only that person learn from.

His contract expires in June and his thinking of new jobs — perhaps overseas. He enjoyed his time with the company, and talks mainly about the positive feeling within a sense of which he is related to Colin Coughlin. "Although it's actually a very large company, he managed to create a relaxed feeling within it. As a director he brings so much experience. But he's open to suggestion and doesn't see it as a problem. And I'm very lucky that he has such faith in me that could do more for me."

There will be more, I think, who will have to see Colin Coughlin's last journey as opening up. If his past work and personal approach to his profession are any longer to go by, then such a concern whatever else is made by Michael Scholey a Hamlet should prove local, intelligent and honest.

Brisbane Actors' Company

Richard Fotheringham

1979 is shaping up as the year to break out for the Brisbane Actors' Company for those regulars. The first is that what started in late 1977 as a group of actors getting on their feet in production of *Midwinter*. The *Midwinter* became other work was not available has become a registered production company, helping to enable a permanent sense of professionalism. The second reason is that the Actors' Company began with surprising success for that first production and has since undertaken seriously less demanding and sometimes less successful productions in 1979 they are going to have to prove up as well as having one major production that is very good indeed. The third factor that will help to make it break down is that they, but the political spotlight has even when the Queensland Government was coming about its an alternative in the last week. Twelfth Night Company this year couldn't there is a really new Twelfth Night under the name, director of John Wilson (a little in the field which has helped the success of created and made the basic for society gathering between and audience very tough indeed. One of the arguments against Twelfth Night company was that the QGO had entered the general public market and this meant a rise for another company covering to similar situations. Can a third professional company, without major subsidy even that of "serving"?

The philosophy behind the Brisbane Actors' Company is that of its founder and artistic director, a former actor and major Australian companies for some years, David Glenister, has clearly not based production on such institutions. One reason — chosen by his choice

of plays and his productions — is that he is a former French lecturer who has worked in the theatre in Paris and his philosophy of theatre derives from classical French drama. Part of the Brisbane Actors' Company production, at least three of plays by French authors, including famous French playwrights (the productions) have been were all presented with considerable attention to detail and all adapted in a strongly interesting way to the times. Perhaps the first, mostly on, right way, in a play and "theater is the play itself" seems to be the most and in their production in the *Midwinter* which I didn't see theory and practice apparently combined superbly in the more recent *Hamlet*. Michael's *Later Hamlet* at was a great deal, shared by many new supporters, which was undoubtedly aided with Glenister as director, designer and leading actor, simply with minimalistic scenic stage which, in his actor, directed toward the edges. The company aim "to encourage all the various talents of the members of the company, and to operate as a self-operating, semi-professional with the theatre community."

The other factor which makes this company odd is that some very good actors who make a living outside the professional have offered their services to the Actors' Company without accepting a salary. Their leading lady Jennifer Hume, is one such amateur/professional, a teacher of dual education who is committed to her work but who is also able to take into major role in new Actors' Company productions. This problem system (or perhaps) is currently covering itself, but for better, by its own, according to its current administrative team. Paul Glenister, Hume's partner in production, the growth of a group, usually in a few years and in an on a project of its interests is that the Actors' Company has been holding public and semi-public operations on such an ad hoc, and possibly chaotic, basis. If Hume agrees that in the system, but values that as well, says this. Part of the reason has written in the group's program, "the company, being to be, job, as well as a full time, can not operate, which was only for 1980 for the financial year. This, which is how much hard thought and time much needed thinking has gone into this matter, the first.

Even so a happy new year and good luck to all in the year to be in Brisbane. There is a lot to be said for the Actors' Company. They have done good work and are, always determined and enthusiastic. Their plans for 1979 — *As You Like It* by John M. Carey, David Glenister and *Midwinter* by John M. Carey, David Glenister and *Midwinter* by John M. Carey — suggest that the company is aware of the need for change and growth in an uncertain time, and the future is all right. But they promise the dark.



David Glenister

Robyn Nevin



ROBERT PAGE on our "Actress for All Seasons"

Robyn Nevin has just finished playing Miss Decker in *A Cherry Seal* to almost unanimous accolades for the devastating virtuosity she brought to the part. On March 14th *Deathtrap* (J. C. Williamson's) opens at Sydney's Theatre Royal, prior to a national tour, with Robyn in the role of Myra, a rich Newport American. Her stage husband, a middle-aged playwright, is played by Dennis Olsen; Michael Blakemore is coming out from London to direct.

Gracing Robyn Nevin as a twinkling figure — in the part of Miss Decker in *A Cherry Seal* — is the young Miss Decker, 34. Cherry Seal is a good one. Decker is an untested type, red lips, wrinkling forehead, unprofessionally spending time and an indulgent laugh which weakens in the audience she is the all except the energy the part demands, a sensibility.

Earlier last year we have seen her as the young Miss Decker, her emotional heading brought low by the common denominator of sexual activity on a brooding, matured one. And the year before, Nevin's adolescent Cleopatra proved to be a creature of youthful whiteness affecting the maturity of a powerful position which it served, a two-emulating mind and body was continually at odds with.

Actually Robyn Nevin is between the two extremes of age, slightly beyond mid-thirties. Off stage the twinkling figure is left behind like the character themselves. In the flesh she is demure, possibly, with a concerned only the means of thick black hair, flashing dark eyes and those expressive yet childishly proportioned hands suggest an actress. She is self-effacing about her looks but is actually a handsome woman.

It is really only in the past few years that she has become a starlet, in the manner of female leads in the Old Folks. Yet her experience spans twenty years, beginning with the very first NIDA movie in 1955, then (and off) the stage.

For the next eighteen years, even while a schoolgirl, she knew that an acting career was "meant to be" — and played the trade as fairly taken down by an enlightened headmistress on the basis of Australia's oldest acting theatre, the Royal NIDA.

The entry to NIDA and graduation with that first group of students went like clockwork, but then an immediate period with the First Players showed the real world is not living up to expectations. Interestingly in that period she understudied Zoe Caldwell in Patrick White's *The Night Festival* but she "didn't have a clue about the work at that time", and adds defensively "I was not as involved then". Period She resuming on lengthy country tours confirmed her poor impression of theatre as practiced. And despite a part in the propaganda production of *St Joan* again with Zoe Caldwell in the lead, at the 1962 Perth Festival, she quit.

For four years she moved back to the Hobart of her school days (she was born in Melbourne) as an occasional presenter for the ABC. Her characteristically meticulous attention to her work is marked by two Logic awards in that period. From there she went to London, now married, and for those years suffered a somewhat bleak existence. Some work was taken up at "an obscure rep" at Hayley for the princely sum of seven-and-a-half pence a week.

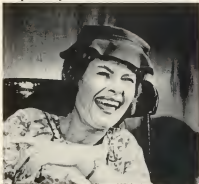
Her return coincided with the break up of the marriage but now there was also a daughter in

consider. It was back in Tasmania that she met Ben Quinlan — "the first person I had ever known who seemed to be doing things the right way — presenting plays thoughtfully and elegantly. Influenced by the discovery of the land of his mind and that had been missing for the last ten years of her professional career she went back to NIDA and a man in *The Legend of the Incredible King* (1970).

That was the starting point for the second phase of Robyn Nevin's career — and the road to the full public recognition that *Deathtrap* will inevitably bring. The starring years are her working in *The Double* (1971) when she was "scandalous — but in character", according to John Gorton "like a banana" at the Parade in 1972, the Perth Playhouse through 1973 and playing Shakespeare's Cleopatra in the 1974 Adelaide Festival. Then back to the Eastern States for roles at Fremantle and Lane St for the remainder of that year. 1975 saw her in the controversial *Five Women Who Went to Jail* (the only person's experience of the film) and the film *The Fourth Wish and Golden*. Robyn was beginning to take off in a big way. It was confirmed when she won "Best Actress NSW" in the 1976 Theatre Awards for her portrayal of Blanche in *Shenandoah* and Gerie Pigson in *Sorcerer*.

The journey has taken her through two marriages and a difficult personal life. How this had no effect on her career? She begins by

"theatre should always be a devastating experience for both actors and audience"



Kathryn Barker as Miss Doctor in *A Cherry Soul*

Photo: François Jégou

answering that her approach is more technical and intellectual than she starts with on oneself, expressing them through relational links, ways to realize it. Never having been hypochondric she has always, like the actress in Miss Doctor, played roles very different from her own personality. She reflects upon on the suffering and composes that personal experience lodged in her brain, will surface and be used in a technical order. It is not Stanislavskian, she never abandons herself in a role but her interpretative powers of observation and memory allow her to remember a gesture or facial expression made in life and then use it in the realization of a role.

There are two aspects in this long journey to being not just on stage but one of the best there is. She believes it takes many years and hard work to develop the skills needed for her to open up those detailed but "concrete" performances of five years ago. If she feels something between joy and angstiness at the unexpected young things who are given instant stardom by the voracious media it is because they have no opportunity to explore their art, none their apprenticeship and are consequently often manufactured into typecast roles which may never be shaken off.

Her attitude is that of one of the most grounded actors in Australian theatre. That commitment puts her on the committee of the Playwrights' Conference, will see stage take her to the infant Hunter Valley Theatre

Company because she believes in an equal balance and did last year press her to be involved with the new crowd Paria Company. "It showed that there were people involved in the theatre who were angry and bored with the way things stand."

That anger and boredom was directed in large measure against the Old Tote. For many who heard her on the stage against the collapsed company which had once kept her on stage, though her anger was clear, it was given firmly but without a trace of self glorification in that the reason is clear that she did so because of the Tote. At the time, in the years that she always remained with the rest for the parts and that those she looked against the attitudes prevalent in individual theatre she was made always to feel besides for the chance of work.

She believes strongly that at a certain stage in an actor's career a point of acceptance should be reached and that the publicity desires put out regardless of their individual or commercial basis should reflect that. Against a not a matter of self promotion, if acting could be raised to a proper status in the eyes of the public, that would do a hell of a lot for the theatre. Her response is one of inevitability when people tell her what she does for a living and when told that of acting as some kind of hobby, "practiced in my spare time" or "as a hobby". She does not want this. "I've been right and what do you do for hobbies of stardom — it's still a kind of regard." One

joy of working with Williamson's is that the critics, automatically from there as part of their media operations.

Her main hope for the "NSW State Theatre" is that it will put more emphasis on recording an ensemble of the best actors possible with even a system of assistance on the lines of the Royal Shakespeare Company in England. The theatre she is concerned would be enormous. First and foremost an identity and role — something not fully established in the theatre without an ensemble. The quality of work could only improve the things people wanted together and the necessary apprenticeship of younger actors would be served in the best possible circumstances. The public would identify with the actors and feel involved in the development of the company.

If the new company manages to escape falling into the old ways of the Old Tote Kathryn Barker will be keen to play her part in its establishment. What she does the future hold? A TV series is being written for her later this year and at the moment she is in rehearsal for *Deadstage* her first engagement with a commercial management.

Given her commitment and views about the theatre — that it should be a devastating experience for audience and actors — why this? For her technique is again the major factor — this play can be devastating in its experience and should be with Michael Williamson directing and Dennis Olsen in the male lead.

Saturday First Preview

Baby's Name, at good sports of a little cynicism, follows Jim Sharman through the labyrinth backstage of the Drama Theatre. It is Second Act introduction: "We should be allowed to have some doubts. Just it's not human not to."

"They disagree" then as though revelling on his roles while looking Baby's merry chase Jim immediately reappears smiling somewhat gleefully.

At what preview directs Baby in a more relaxed mood explains the "doubts." She was not angry but admits she was serious — "We all need to have doubts and I was concerned about Act One but Jim said there was no need to worry." Jim Sharman, not exactly naive, gives by his cast a positive calm, an unflagging confidence that can at times prove to be unswerving. Baby's doubts deal specifically with her portrayal of White's most outrageously difficult dramatic creation: Miss Ducker. And to her, of course, such doubts are a way of working with the role.

What you is it difficult to portray a character that has a terrible fall for God knows but to start a system and a sense of her own power for goodness and love? (And know) What calls for a complex and extreme femininity that must avoid the pitfalls of easy caricature or grotesque over-sensitization. Baby knows this and how tonight before getting the two her worries but then maybe she might not be too concerned.

Patrick White has kept a watchful eye on things and has accompanied such experiences as "defensive production" and "deflecting moments." On Act One to me on opening night. "A world class production."

Just about the process of the over-riding and one can be certain both play and production will elicit a very mixed response. Indeed, premiere night audience tried through the foyer at 11.15 pm like wanted music and one overhead whisper of: "I liked the production but not the play." Maybe Baby was right? Maybe, the production did as Jim wanted: confirm — but then perhaps theatre should stimulate irritate and provoke.

Friday Before the Preview

I am heading with Jim to the Greenroom and he seems quietly confident. The previous evening friends of the cast had been invited to to make up the first (small) audience. "It was about time." Jim tells me "others" were getting a little sick — especially the comic staff with which the cast were over familiar. He adds that I've been successful. My intervention was that Act One was too slow and too much of its comedy. Act Three particularly the Church scene, lacked pacing and thematic clarity. Act Two, though, I found stirring. It had moments unmatched in Sydney theatre for years. Yet a number of people had left after Act Two and the

Jim Sharman directs Patrick White's most challenging play.



"Tonight a Sydney curtain will finally rise on *A CHEERY SOUL* and a season that heralds the newly evolving Sydney Theatre Company will shake fifteen years dust from this most imaginative and challenging of the White plays. The approach may, I warn, be a little confronting."

— Jim Sharman

"... it's not long before one senses a kind of obsession, a shared obsession with Patrick White's vision..."

thought crossed my mind that an early discussion of modern and symbolism would prove unpalatable and cinema might not be worth an dispositive, fragmented. The obvious question, then who talks in *A Cherry Seal* largely proposed for the Twin's York, Theater 70 Season and thereby the Film Company?"

The answer "I've always wanted to do it and it is the logical follow on from *Season*" Obviously *The Season* at Sanpaula was very successful and could be seen as a way of preparing audiences for *A Cherry Seal* — a more obviously fragmental and poetic drama if somewhat more, and more in vision. The play is for Jim unquestionably White's finest dramatic piece and it is not long before one senses a kind of obsession, a shared obsession, with White's vision — there is Jim openly admits a "creative fulfillment" in being instrumental in the transformation of script to White's drama.

That obsession deals with the problem of finding an alternative theatre to the heavily all-together back-slapping song-and-dance musical that Jim sees as the "single line of our theatre from the gold rush to the present day". The stance is affirmatory and idealistic in positioning a society marked by a tragic pattern sense of its own community. Yet in fact too because one wonders whether very much of the "newer society are really in search of themselves. Maybe that tradition of theatre has been as idealistic as reflected in the script of its audience, so I pose the poem again — "Was that a man chosen for the first play of the Sydney Theatre Company a broken Season?"

Jim seems unconcerned. He makes by answering that the idea of a "World Season" of ten plays produced by the major Sydney companies is excellent: everyone gets a go and audiences will be exposed to a wider sense of the "very sense I permit, are not parts of *A Seal*" and because the example the *All* re Sanpaula alone which strikes

to, possibly, involving the latter
the audience? Jim replies
the transformation is
— but twenty years
most say
of *A*

is not more complex, the character

This was, I thought, one of Shawman's finest achievements in *Season* there was a lot of humanity coming through. He is engaged by the great response to Brian Thomson's story clothes (less by symbolic of empty suburban conformity). And in positioning music that is attributed to White's condemnation of suburban life believes that while White condemns conformity that people themselves are not condemned, merely represented. It is the audience's pre-conception that condemns the characters and, indeed, some of the old laughter in the Sandown Home scenes on opening night seems to confirm this idea. The poem is challenging, but White himself has stated he wants to discover "the extraordinary behind the ordinary, the mystery and poetry which alone makes tolerable the lives of most people and occasionally his own." Conventions or not, it is a tall order for directors and actors.

Jim mentions that he does not draw ideas from the theatre in the sense of re-creating other productions. He draws ideas from as many areas as possible and gives them to the stage as representations of life — hence the humanity. The idea sounds perhaps a little glib at first but when one looks at *A Cherry Seal*'s best to make a list of ideas. Jim wanted his actors to work against type and act as an objective, representational professional. This evolved out of a lot of discussion during the *Season*. The actors wanted to re define their role and the level of their contribution to the production.

It didn't work then but with *A Cherry Seal* the actors were able to combine their viewpoints not only in their performances but in the overall understanding of the play. To him the means the style of playing "persuaded the actor to be intelligent, articulate and able to reveal their observations of the society around them. Indeed the only work outside the text was devoted towards a more perceptive observation of detail in human behaviour." I thought this to be very true of the Sandown Home scenes where the actors avoided stereotyped work on the old ladies. Jim is very definitely against the actor working too close to text and is pleased about the attention that the cast has achieved in the production. This he attributes partly to excellent and partly to "hard work." Of course the

— and finding of roles is helped
— about the idea of Koten playing
and the twelve other actors
a thirty odd roles. This involving a
considerations — retrospective and
it seemed logical to carry a through
ally concerned for the Performance. Most
is the developing character and a well
ugh the eyes of the Characters. Miss Lily
a the Waterman's over the play's three acts.
However the director must trust, though Miss
Dexter, a sparkling development that moves
away from realism to a semi-absent operated

ation. This is essential to achieve White's essential without mimicking.

The quality cost also serves another function for Jim. One of the reasons behind the production was to re establish the play as the experience of our theatre. This approach makes it conceivable in budgetary terms for companies unable to mount large cost productions. It seems too that the World Play Season at subsidised at considerable reduced finance from other subsidised State Companies. The cost involved in mounting productions in the Drama Theatre leaves no room for the business operations of the other "family" made theatre and should a Company emerge out of the Season the financial elements would need to be covered.

Musik, Design and Acting

Camron Allan has worked with Jim on two productions — most recently on the film *The Night of the Phoenix* based on Whittie first screen play. This is Camron's first full stage work and he finds it to be most challenging (due to the mix and dry of television or film. The music for *A Cherry Seal* includes the interval piece — possibly recorded Woodard Aswell piece that holds out the 20's, "20's songs that the cherry seeds were sown on. Shawman and Allan have involved nearly all of the scripted sound cues and Sharon Clifford acts on stage as the grand to some extent that the musical will be provide some links and to play Camron's superbly haunting melody that opens Act Two.

The music functions like the rest of music in the play, for example. Miss Dexter looks into a hat of old time, or drops a generous amount of tea leaves on the floor while she and Willow scene some dancing or pouring tea from an empty pot. The concept is overacting. Paces interlocked into a tuxedo pattern, scenes sound. The music was designed to remain subversive to the acting performance. Camron says that in working with Jim nothing is forced, ideas are allowed to gel.

The collaboration has been as successful that there are tentative plans to evaluate the work into something approaching an opera!

Brian Thomson has been from New York on one week's notice to design for *A Cherry Seal*. He spent the next night at Jim's place reading the text with director, each carrying three or four parts, and in a few hours he had set out a cardboard set and props. (There can be little to quibble about with the set — it is stunning.) Jim finds it to be along with Wendy Dickson's Season the best use of the Drama Theatre since *Lower Depths* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*. The broad concept was minimalist: unadorned space, interactive maximum imaginative space that opens down to a metaphor for Miss Dexter's final scene. It works. When I find out Koten Niven took back finished to audience and walk from Peter Carroll's swaggy

"Everything in his own person", it was one of the riveting moments. Brian tells us that Patrick White's descriptive writing is as literal as not to be interlarded with and here the art, contra the tradition of literary artists, is representational rather than symbolic.

Those literary artists are back again ("Australia's greatest sculptor" says Brian) and Christie like curtains on clothes lines serve as fences or walls. The furniture is grey blue, stark, and serves for many functions, the actors move a chair during moments. One of the earlier ideas — to have the actors smoking, up and walking onstage — was scrapped and now they sit left or right of stage, serving as observers or towards the end as chorus, or word would offend. Simply there is an attempt at illusion.

Brian has worked with Pat on three occasions, only eight years now including *Superman: Theogenesis*, *Open and the Third* and it is clear that the evolution of director/producer relationship is one of deep trust. "One has complete freedom working with Jim," says Brian.

Peter Carroll is working with Jim Shannon for the first time, it is also his first experience of the somewhat imposed Drama Theatre. He finds the direct administration and practical mode of things somewhat overwhelming compared to working with Patrick where "it was all one big family".

Added to this Peter found the huge stage and distance from the audience involved necessary adjustments in his acting. But these personal moments in his performance have been extensive and Peter has found working with Jim "a marvellous experience". He states that Jim is never negative and intensifies all moods — and that during a rehearsal period involves keeping a cool eye on many things. Jim wants the early rehearsal period used as the producers learn operating — this can be the acid test for young or inexperienced directors.

Peter's sense of confidence in his relationship is clear enough. He wants to know exactly where he should take the part. "Jim Shannon" he adds, "knows more than most directors — exactly what he wants. He suggests what had earlier occurred to me — that Jim shares with Patrick something of an obsession: a unique vision of Australian drama."

Katey Nereid's main fear after the Secondary premiere is that in *An Old Man Doctor* is too close to what she says is, but who else? (Name Editor: I thought that to be one of moments during the Thursday run but she wants to be moving in the right direction now. She is worried enough that if the part is even remotely as close as she thinks it will not allow it to develop in Acts Two and Three.

Katey has worked with Jim on many occasions and it is fitting that she play Miss Doctor some two years after she stole the show with her Gerie Pigeon in Jim's *Season*. The development of character from Gerie to Miss Doctor is an emblematic one in as much as she feels it will be one of Katey's great roles. Peter

Continued on page 14



Peter Carroll, Katey Nereid, Jim Shannon, Patrick White, Peter Carroll and Peter Carroll. Photo: Philip Gyles.



Katey Nereid as Miss Doctor braves the winds.

THE Pram's NEW Push

1979: The Year of The Thaw — or motels in China and Shakespeare at the Pram.

A discussion between Suzanne Spanner and Fay Mokotow (Chairperson) John Hawkes, Bill Garner, Max Gillies, Wilfred Last, Terry Maher and Richard Murphet of The Australian Performing Group at The Pram Factory.

The January issue of *The Penetration* celebrates a year of theatre by The Australian Performing Group and it introduces a new line in seventies wit: it consists of a new economic policy and a thematic and ideologically based programming system for the coming year. Whether it is — as Les Rubeis diagnosed in his Age article summing up the year in Melbourne theatre that "old recipes no longer work" — the

The new Australian play is no longer their intellectual province. David Williamson has moved up if not out. Initial theories and actors have broken the former substructure to Anglophile models and everywhere they speak in the regional and not in the voice of Les Power. Where does this leave the group — unmoored on their own rusty spearshead? Not at all, either back to their fundamentalism, still an innovation and characteristic of radical theatre in theory and content. Having hacked their way through the boogymen before the match can begin is no rest.

Stage Whistle was staged in the Front Theatre and in Prime Factory terms had high pre-production odds, so the fact that it generated small audiences exacerbated the end of year financial situation. On the other hand two smaller scale, and hence more cost-effective productions directed by women in the Back Theatre — Kerry Doyle's *The Sister Years Of Peter Pan Kate* and Fay Mokotow's *Power* attracted rapidly increasing and considerable critical acclaim. Similarly Richard Murphet's excellent, shortening production of *A Light Shining in Darkness* (which did well in the Back Theatre). All three productions would have remained the move to the larger capacity Front Theatre as *Black To Black* Street had done earlier in the year. Clearly there were lessons to be learnt from these experiences.

1981 also saw the first year of two new writers — Barry Deane and Philip Mackintosh. Deane could be described as an outsider again.



Barry Deane

he was the first Literature Board sponsored APG playwrighting competition with *Food for Thought* while Mackintosh is a collective member who has worked with Nightshade. Both writers had had a number of shorter works produced at La Mama (Mackintosh' marvellous *States Seven* Seven was put on independently in the Back Theatre earlier in the year) an indication of the role played by the APG was a visit to La Mama.



Fay Mokotow

common from within and without at that 1978 was not one of the APG's best years. However the most productive approach to the situation and demands of last year is to reflect upon the contradictions problems and new directions which became evident.

Of the stable of writers whose names have been associated with past APG successes it emerges Barry Deane's *Stage Whistle* was the only production emanating from that formerly famous seed bed. However audiences "stayed away in droves", whereas five years ago it may have drawn an equal droves these same people looked at it as an old recipe and one which the APG promoted — a somewhat heterodox subject given a local Australian theme and its interpretations, replete with broad physical comedy and lively non-verbal expression. Leaving aside the merits of it as a piece of writing, why does it gain the APG audience of today? Largely I think because the APG has carried out its original brief and has had a profound if unquantifiable effect on local theatre.

London Smith's Nightshade group produced Mackintosh's *Demons of The Absolute* and Penetration's chilling *Pre Penetration* *Servy Now* at the Prime Factory as well as other readings and events outside the mission of the Prime. Nightshade is one of the many sub-groups which the APG has spawned over the last few years. Of these issues is still operating but independently of the APG and the Centre. It recently joined forces with students from the Victorian College of The Arts in a mammoth Big Top event in the grounds of the National Gallery in addition there are autonomous groups operating under the umbrella of the APG as film (Prime Factory Productions — *Democracy*) and radio (CUB and JRRR) all of which strive to the reality and diversity of the group as a whole.

Well that was seventy eight — a year that got better by its end and which, and as August with *Seven Years in the Back* and *Food for Thought* in the Front really looked as if it was going to win off Ian Fensley founded at the end of the year with Stage Whistle.

What then of severing ties? A commercial company faced with the same situation could easily have decided that the only reasonable possible would be to grace the terms of the acquisition of the actual and personal diversity. Fortunately for all of us the APG is not a commercial company and while faced with the lack of it already a lot of the group's time and energy, not solely for their needs in political and artistic considerations as well as financial survival. This solution is to spread the available funds as widely as possible in exchange and financial diversity while simultaneously ensuring that the national failure of one project cannot jeopardize the chances of others.

Fay Maloney explained that the New Economic Policy (NEP) creates a strategic system that no show whether in the Back or Front will control a specific theme. She said that the choice was between a small number of fully subsidized shows or a larger number partially subsidized.

Even when that decision we've decided to subsidize some shows to a lesser extent and



Black scene of Danni You-Race

some to an even lesser extent, which correlates with the use of the Back and Front Theaters, but means that there is unlikely to be as great a gap in resources — people are, whatever the case, between the shows in these places.

The shows that there will be two categories of shows — fully funded and semi-subsidized. John Houston noted that the policy is about reducing the risk that the program, a whole takes and the risk difference will be in terms of people's personal incomes. Funding in effect will only cover the cost of a show to get it in production. This means that once any show is put into motion and the project group feels that it is going to cost more than the resources allocated or think in less money than that, then the risk will be taken by the people actually working on it rather than to the APG itself.

The difference between the fully funded shows and the semi-subsidized projects is that the APG is providing greater backing up come in shows for which they place a ceiling on the amount of money anyone working on them can



earn — Equity stipulations. Whereas in the previous economic program where the APG has provided less money, there is no ceiling on how much people can earn. This scheme not only cuts the self-management goals of the collective but is common practice in Front and Experimental groups. Richard Mayfield added:

The project groups themselves take the larger responsibility — choosing the shows and selling it to an audience, which gives them more control over their work and a greater interest in the outcome of that work.

When the APG began a necessary worked in this way because the collective was just 12, but in recent years it has grown to the potentially unmanageable size of between fifty and sixty members is the only practicable political solution is the self-managing. Max Collier added that since the collective because so large it has taken the group a long time to find a group. However, Bill Gower explained that the APG still maintains the overall control and the power to decide which shows get the position. "For example this year the collective has decided to provide more employment opportunities to women and we act as a position to do what we can to enforce it."

Richard and Fay explained that this year women's considerations would be the criteria informing the choice of scripts. While this may at first seem a limitation on programming, Richard added that the very programming of a theme has led in fact, to more creative choices being made. "You feel you look deeper and further for material, and equally, more confident with a number of possible scripts to



Stand

both money in choice and make for more opportunities chosen." Willard Lutz explained that the loss of posters distribution systems means that the most only has to be ample opportunities for women as directors and actresses but also that the women could not present women in a sexist or stereotypical way. They added:

It is a poster and creative map as well as a real ideological map. Solidarity is being a lot of plays to the forefront of our consciousness which were a short before. For instance to be able to go out visiting director Anne Noyes that brief has meant that he has presented a number of existing possibilities — and one thing which he may direct is Edward Bond's *The Women*.

Among the plays the APG has accepted for presentation in 1979 are Stephen Sondheim's *Trains and Other Women's Mirrors*, *Almond*, *Trains* is about Suzanne Wason and *Almond* is a musical about US cultural imperialism and while both deal with universal political experience they also explore the consciousness of women within these themes.



Sue Brighton

Productions of *The Evening Of The Storm* and *Blower* shows are planned with Jonathan Hurst directing. Sondheim's production is based on the position of overpaid women and Sydney Lawrence's *Just Get* drawing issues reflects on the psychic conflicts of women of color and politics. Other possible shows as yet can include *My Way / Play* by the Italian socialist writer and director Dario Fo which concerns the battle between housewives and the superstitious over rising prices which has taken place in Italy in recent years, and a promising new and direct show by local musician and writer Roy Cornall, called *Fading In Love Again* (sic).

Richard Mayfield explained that this year the group is making a concerted effort to search out overseas scripts, whereas in the past it has had a tendency not to think of buying scripts unless a decision had been made to do a play, often by which time it was too late.

We are moving away from dealing initially usually with stereotypical views of Asian stereotypes and history — moving on the one

message drives Miss Decker to attack, as it did drove the Rev Walsman with her lightning. She takes on the role of God and pulls her armour of prayer around her like a warm cloak. But her message is for herself alone. "Oh I could tell, if I could tell! All of you! But there is not future if it is not as humble. The only failure is not to realise."

There are echoes of *A Day After* in these words of anguished rage.

I will do such things —

What they are, you I know not, but they shall be.

The terror of the earth

The scene ends with the excited girl witness, confronted with the body of the dead minister, crying: "My thoughts could light a fire! I could breathe fire into the dead — if only they was willing."

The play leaves her on her adrenaline-fueled heels, in the company of jarring children, a ragged and a rampy dog who pees on her leg. In her last words she draws desperately upon her last faith. For her there is neither death nor life and only the beginnings of humility, for consolation.

That Patrick White should have written *A Cherry Seed* is remarkable enough. That it should have been produced in Australia in 1961 is more remarkable still. Experimental drama may by that time have been 150 years old but here it was relatively unknown. Needs was not performed in English speaking countries virtually until the 1980s, and writers like Woodford ran and much later.

Since the 1960s Australian audiences may not have become much more sophisticated, but they

have become accustomed to a variety of styles in the theatre, to being surprised, at least. And that is an advance. A further advance lies in a greater willingness to listen to the message of Patrick White's burnt text, to his evocation of great heart and barren landscape. The country has begun to catch up at last in *What's even more remarkable* and it is the theatre he is, even today's playwrights than he ever was.

The luxury of Stamatou's production and Brett Thomas's design which works, in harmony with it, is that it takes on unflinchingly the problems of interpretation imposed by the mixture of realism and caricature. From the quietest cue on the characters played monotonously above the stage like puppets and Miss Decker vents in our direction, sending a silent scream, from the moment Rubya Nerva explodes down the aisle in all too audible laughter, one knows that this is a production in the like of which one may never see again.

The play is a comedy, though a black one, and Miss Decker is a comic character. The *Crucians* are happy in their suburban complacency, the old women in their second childhood. But the production never covers up the hard truth. Miss Decker may be a small figure of fun but White spins her up like a flesh wound as an object of pity and warning.

Rubya Nerva's performance, as I have said, is extraordinary. That way across, still in her thirties, is transformed into a glaucous ball of ageing but indestructible flesh, all too capable of showing the monster's horns on Thursday. Flat faced, developed in caricature and disconcerting little snickings, the woman is more than funny. His

thunder. She is formidable and indefatigable. Miss Nerva's gut, his limbs spread as though her body were too big for her, is both cartoon like and touching, dropping at each moment the indefatigability her voice commands. Her shuffling too and sweeping arms as she telephones her admired brother, will remain for me one of the true comic moments in the theatre.

Finally I think Harry Kipour was right when he called the performance an improvisation rather than a characterisation. Miss Nerva is still too young, an actress too bright to bring off the last big game of space which transforms the last act. In the strange between, she was in part prevented by the cruel success of John Pasmore as the Rev Walsman on whom the building of Miss Decker's tragic nature in this poem depends. Pasmore, unable to cope with prayer, replaced completely with emotionless, the result was disastrous to the final scenes.

There were other faults. Thomas's attempt to unify the domestic style of the first act with the grandeur of the rest diminished the sense of a coup and being split open by its gigantic conclusion. (The *Crucians* really needs two more plants. Nevertheless Peter Carroll and Pat Bishop make a touching pair — Miss Bishop's careful husband is marvellous. It is a good cast — in the second act the brooding figure of Maggie Kipourick is Miss Liller's splendour.)

A confusing evening, certainly. It marks a new level in the work of Tim Mannage and Rubya Nerva — and in the combination of Patrick White on our theatre. Let us hope it sets the standard for the Sydney Theatre Company.

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Lon Kasserman (Barney) and Maggie Devore (Lulu) in the *Farinetti's Last of the Red Hot Lovers*

Only a light comedy of situations

LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS

KOHLER PAGE

Last of the Red Hot Lovers, by Neil Simon. The Broadway Theatre, 1976. Directed by Neil Simon. Cast: Lon Kasserman (Barney), Maggie Devore (Lulu), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty).

In the social attitudes of this country adultery and its consequences are treated as a fact, apart on fixtures of social protocol not escaped, if anything, with the carefulst jest. If Neil Simon's plays, and countless other dramas and films, are anything to go by sexual problems are the sources of Middle America. Adultery and its consequences seem to be a major parameter with potential for libretto, feature, scenarios and, of course, the analyst — the more so when also reflected with the Jewish Diaspora anomalous syndrome.

The unusually titled *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* tells this anything and yet again. Barney Casserman (Lon Kasserman) has had forty-seven years of a pleasant though reasonably hard working existence, so remarkable has a been for the late resistance that he believes Lulu has spared him. Apart from one minor additional scandal there has only been wife Thelma. Now he is beginning to think about death, needing the obvious, daily just for the satisfaction of not seeing himself dismantled, and is responding to a twenty-two year old largely to shake up the remnants of it all.

The story arc is no more complex than a close encounter of three kinds (though Barney never manages "the third" contact) in fact a search for spiritualism is set against a desire solely for physical gratification. The move he wants to deliver into the Great Beyond the most straightforwardly rapacious lady back of Florida she loves — time.

Eight months later Barney tries again. The plot is a pious fiction, but the tale the hands are thrown up from too safe. She is psychically garbled with a confusion belied in her life as a "thriller" audience consumed with prophecies, sightings by big shots in

the entertainment world and, truly, sleeping through and long after, the climax with her female Man never teacher. The whole subliminal message is in fact a cop-out from life's easy gray realities. Barney is left gapping on pot and frustrated again.

The last months later, with him now as study for the ultimate physical pleasure as the lady of his first encounter, an amplexion is made with his wife's great friend after a distant come-on from her. However all the words (words) willow in how departed such a liaison is without actually getting down to anything. Her melancholic view of the world is backed by statistics of adultery (17%) and her enjoyment (percentage 17%) that all the statistics over the lack of desire (longing and gentle human beings) but not to be triggered by the discovery of her husband's affair with her best friend.

In the only purpose of the play, Barney appears finally to snap. He rushes left, flings open the (closed) and back he comes in, as a fit of masculine dominance (if the world is against him, he means) let us go, long strong deeply ridged, strong, love and gentility are the very standing blocks that have withheld his personal existence. Of course no tiny dream, it is all therapy for David Ben-Gurion who loves with a new moon of how so handle his life. Barney has back on the track... and phones his wife.

The movie line reflects a copy movie which opens the adultery status as the play shows, up, and the audience are left with the statistic, proliferation of adultery among themselves in decent, loving and gentle human beings. Such safe shipping of roses allows the play to be viewed only as a light comedy of human life. As such it is a delicate smile with the producers and welcome coming rapid fire — and with satisfactory regular process.

Neil Simon's work demands cosmic blue production for the escape to work and John Cazale runs much mastery to the task of devotion. The timing is flawless, the detail resistance and the casting superb. Lon Kasserman is the professional Barney, playing the role with engaging understatement to allow full impact to the final outcome. And the ladies are well demonstrated such feeling out their comic characters. Maggie Devore strikingly elegant as the rapacious lady, i.e. Hattie Dahlman as the female feminist and Beverly Sills (specially noted as the comedy public) friend.

If Simon's plays are just light comedies — and Broadway would hold him — one wonders quite what the Ensemble (perhaps) there is doing, presenting them, and so many as that what students be subjected to such (what) marginal American novel watching put because Simon is capable of something, something? Williamson, God bless him is much more ironic, satirical and honest (truthful in the perspective) is a character he is more complex, his voice is more embracing and as a comic writer he is almost as funny.

Tactics of evangelism

STATEMENTS

LARRY WAGNER

Statements by Adam Fugard. Theatrical Theatre. The Broadway Theatre, 1976. Directed by Neil Simon. Cast: Lon Kasserman (Barney), Maggie Devore (Lulu), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty), John Cazale (Sam), David Warner (Marty).

In the wake of the rapacious response that *Statements* has gratified received a certain amount of criticism to be less than recommended to it. And the response to the production of Fugard's recently live music play, in the case of the *Statements* (Fugard), appears to have been positive mainly one which would tell a religious experience an emotional commitment to the message with little consideration of the form or approach of its creators. Fugard's intention is propaganda, but his method is to present one fact of moral code without explanation or explanation on why or conditioned responses to being about unaccepting acceptance — the tactics of an evangelist.

In *Statements* Fugard's subject is black/white racial apartheid in South Africa. He shows briefly the efforts of the law on a white Minister and half-caste school teacher who have become friends. In the half light of the bare area we see them naked, smoking, fire making, singing, dancing, embracing, then under a flashing light to the sound of barking dogs, armed, imprisoned, punishing in the darkness, and then a scene for the film, for and concerns for her. Between sequences a policeman, side stage, reads data past his coast, report of their efforts.

In such a play it is more than likely that the political statement could have the effect of confronting people with a true vision of the status quo, even of challenging them to action. In usual liberal Australia it is catering to the prevaricated notions of its audience it evokes a gut response, the self righteousness of which negates the point of the message. But this is not to say that such a political play could not be relevant and involving to us. *Statements* looks little in the way and, in the context, tries almost completely on an assumed response to a known pose.

Fugard has made the mistake of many propagandist writers, in presenting exclusively his own point of view, which promotes no understanding of the situation or into of how it came about or even of how it could be bettered. It might have been more powerful had the leaders, the working class of the law been allowed equal revelation of his viewpoint. The play's stance seemed increasingly completed in the heat of raging questions connected unanswered, perhaps avoided.

Just as the substance of a church centers a rejected attitude to what occurs within it, so the class proximity of two mixed people evoked an atmosphere of shock and discussion in the audience, which was then brightened by the

rather deadly problem of exploring his sexuality to his wife and not reveal and a complex experience with a sort of erotically quizzical quality. One of those who needs looks, needs poetry and also awkward questions. The boy's clothes seem to be Poetry or Therapy. He seems a dead by using a more total into a wall. The Lawrence link. Through the shorter party Mervyn means the place call from the hospital saying they're turned off the bed's life support gear. A really comic backdrop to the arguments between Lee Poetry/Mervyn and Therapy/The Ward/Dave.

In the play it is evident where the authors

sympathies lie: Her for Life and Uncertainty. But it is unfortunate he doesn't give the argument any relevant reasons. This is no Faust. By choosing an unnamed Therapy he has had to be so general that David and Helen do appear infomercial, rather than as humans who have made a real choice as some people do with Eastern religions, or Marxism, or Methodism. And Mervyn's unguarded shouts in favour of Poetry and Faith in Humanity have an air of slogans one perhaps induced by middle class English disaffection.

However I did agree with him. It is also a pity that both of these events are tedious or repulsive

I liked Simon's lecture on Mervyn — he gave the role a personality, while leaving the performance that was appropriately underlined by a couple of stony every now and again. Peter Corbett was correctly unhelped, unemotional — sweet conviction itself. One wished that he characterised, and the woman, had a bit more going for them. Mervyn Myles has directed the show at a steady pace with a sense of respect for the text that has not only a altogether disastrous. A bit of exposure to looking out here and there might have benefited proceedings. As it stands, James Saunders plays it like Spain without the tactics.

Consummate skill, magical artistry.

FUKIEN PUPPETS

SUANNY SIK-NHEI

The *Tea for Two* Puppet Theatre is a small troupe of artists who have been performing in the West for over 20 years.

In China the art of puppetry goes back some two thousand years whereas in the West we have only three hundred years of experience. In call upon puppetry in the Chinese we are infinite possibilities in the field. Also among the Fukien Puppet Theatre is an art form. In China today there are three schools — puppets are manipulated and painted by hand by stick and by the hand and the three schools are a combination of the "three schools". The puppets have exquisite carved and painted faces and in the traditional manner in which they are manipulated, they are controlled by the hand and the stick. A puppeteer can manipulate two characters with totally different expressions with his or her two hands.

Although the puppets' hand the puppeteer into the cloth doll like a glove, the technique, according to the best tradition of the art, and which is unique to the art. The *Tea for Two* Puppet Theatre was established under the patronage of the Chinese State in 1988 and is the living presence of Mervyn's character in the *Tea for Two* Puppet Theatre. The art of "Tea for Two" is handed down from father to son and is a unique art form.

The repertoire for the tea consists of five plays, four of which are drawn from the *Tea for Two* and one is a new play. The plays deal with the traditional themes of love and death, the puppeteer's own coming and going, the life play deals with similar themes in a more modern setting. The most in the historical plays is the common people's life, the puppeteer's own coming and going, the life play deals with similar themes in a more modern setting. The most in the historical plays is the common people's life, the puppeteer's own coming and going, the life play deals with similar themes in a more modern setting.

However it is the consummate skill and seemingly magical artistry that commands our attention and causes the imagination to puppetry through the art form. The puppeteer, who is a young man or woman who manipulates the puppets, are trained to be in the puppetry as actors — a significant distinction which points up



The *Tea for Two* Puppet Theatre in the *Tea for Two*.

the high degree of characterisation and the puppeteer's own coming and going, the life play deals with similar themes in a more modern setting.

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Raise the flags boys and out with the B.V.D.'s

THE HIGH AND THE MITEY

BRUCE MCKENROY

The High and the Mitey is a musical that has college boys outside Federal College Street, Adelaide 2 February 1977. Director: Richard Wilson. With: Murray Roadknight, Bob Hickman, Sandy Rogan and Richard Wilson.

Whether it is a peculiarity of Adelaide or perhaps all universities, but audiences seem refreshed and at ease when treated to a production wholly Australian. Raise the flag boys and out with the B.V.D.'s. *The High and the Mitey* is a musical mad cap college put together by Murray Roadknight and Bob Hickman with assistance from Sandy Rogan and Richard Wilson, while in Adelaide Peter Vincent Roadknight played piano.

The combination of Roadknight/Hickman blends, often through their very difference, for an evening full of words and dash. From the opening 'Misty's mum's' music to the final rendition of the knockout ballad 'Lies' written in aid of Dorothy Hewett's legal battles, the audience were with both performers, working as hard, eager to be amused as deliberately enjoying themselves. The balance between Murray Roadknight's realism and Bob Hickman's absurdity moved gently at times, at times the tempo was dramatic like when the scally, mockballad 'Gael in our Town' was rendered by Mr. Roadknight and at other times you were consumed in laughter as was the audience during Bob Hickman's concourse 'Newcastle Song'. The song to the town where Bob Hickman spent part of his youth was at first written in 1950 but received its first play in 1975, which says something for the durability of the Australian concourse. You love it all the words and think how many times have I loved that before', it is not the first Aussie song with its four letter gut sticks. More from Newcastle is a legend, but it is immortalised in the flesh. Belated and apple pie show us of today. Highway describes his sense of humor as 'back on the wall', if we take this to mean a gleefully mocking look at people quips then his humor serves to record a culture not easily achieved at any other medium, the spoken word, the song, the lovely look, great poetry at the hands of Mr. C. Charles Chaplin and Norman Gnanou.

Murray Roadknight has been doing the ground for many years now, at one stage she in fact was involved with the then South

Australian Theatre Company, she came out to hold her audience with witty lines and solid poetic work. Her voice has a maturity which is equally at home singing the Randy Newman song 'Short People' or high rating a through Don's Nobody Sings 'Mc No Bad News'. You somehow feel an empathy towards Mr. Roadknight, her wit and a touch of gaudiness, she has a strange English accent as and as a member of the audience commented she verges on being Israeli, but she does induce a genuine love of what she's doing and puts one into singing a great deal of her self. It is interesting to observe a one time fairly straight ball performer emerging with the wit of cabaret and comedy. Her choice of material and her intense delivery form a natural link to Bob Hickman's style of humor. The comic tunes, such as 'Love at First Sight' and 'Dance with Broken Bones' display a maturity not afraid to poke fun at itself. At times she created an atmosphere of music hall while at other moments you found yourself in a European cabaret, she took us to the ball, clubs, the pub and the rock and roll pop hall.

With so many shows being done for the cult cabaret type, singing it is a wonder there is not a regular casual seating outside of the theatre world to display such wares as *Kold Ronger Kaffer* and *Street Cabaret Melbourne* has its 'Last Laugh' but also Adelaide has its own equivalent perhaps the closest would be the 'Circle Room' whose access is usually music. Certainly entering the 'Spout' with its array of tables for four you sensed a certain elegance for although the production was staged extraordinarily there was still missing some of that 'at home' atmosphere. The backdrop of Australian flag leads to *The High and the Mitey* a touch off the suburban country in a time when we need to be reminded that we do have an identity.

A show well worth seeing for many reasons not least being to witness the further growth of an indigenous style of humor and expression.

MERELY PLAYERS

BRUCE MCKENROY

Merely Players is an Entertainment about Acting and Theatre. Director: Edward Wright. Dates: Sunday February 11. Times: 1.15, 3.15, 5.15 and 7.15. With: Daphne Garry, Edwin Hodge, Anne Lenth and Dennis Grant.

On a few South Australian Sunday afternoon is the splendour of Edward Wright House. The work proved the best to present *Merely Players* a reading of a compendium about things that read in aid of the Adelaide Kibb Scholarship. Colin George brought together the material to

well as read it along with Daphne Garry, Edwin Hodge, Anne Lenth and Dennis Grant. The Adelaide Kibb Scholarship is designed to subsidise one South Australian actor for a term of three years to work with the State Theatre Company. A worthy cause indeed.

The programme consisted of readings from diverse sources ranging from Shakespeare to C. J. Dennis. With each excellent performer equipped with a wide range of dialects, letters and spontaneous wit, derived into a sort of delectable room state of mind, an afternoon of seriousness, laughter and poetic laughter.

They proved delighted as Richard Banton's description of St. Laurence Olivier's performance prior to dropping the changing roll of his hand, were moved by the tale of an elderly Russian actor's desperate behaviour on forgetting his lines and applauded the familiar strains of Dostoev. At the Play Trials of the theatre for the audience being a sense of confirmation and confirm just why they undergo the stresses of putting on a show.

The actors, or 'Devil's Children', as described in one part of the programme reflected a certain intimacy with the material, by way of a knowing gaze you were made aware of the universality of the trade. However, the story of Othello being read by a captain combed at a Mid West performance are fortuitously no more today. Despite people gather in great houses and halls in the streets of creative voices talking fascinating tales.

Playwrighting Competition 'Everyman today'

A prize of \$2,000 is being offered to the winner of a competition for an 'Everyman Today' play.

The human and ecological concerns of the Club of Rome best express the theme for this play.

Closing date for scripts: 31 July, 1979.

Further information from A.N.U. Arts Centre, P.O. Box 4, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.



Pervasive geniality

NO W.A.Y.

by JILL GILLAM

NO W.A.Y. The Hole in the Wall Tour, WA, August 1 to 10 1979. Director: Edgar Mendillo. Stage and Tour Manager: John Needles. Musical Director: Stuart Lindsay. Executive Staff: Jack Langley, Alan Cassell. Edgar Mendillo (playwright).

Being Western Australian in 1979 is no easy thing, the whole state having succumbed to a certain bout of schizophrenic "celebrations" which forces even fairly individuals well suited to media language writing under the skin. It was a stroke of fortune among stars that saw NO W.A.Y. open 1979 for the Hole in the Wall Tour that any mighty among of the manifold absences of our celebrating masses was really done. The event was fuelled by maximal parody of our collective self-inflation but few of the sketches took on so severely to rock as our parables

deserve. A spirit of geniality pervaded the whole show, which was not much diminished by the discomfort of the audience and on the night I saw it. In the moments before the opening number a tumbler containing a clear liquid (which one supposed to be water) crashed to the floor, causing for the first half some very slippery conditions under foot. As Alan Cassell admitted with some air: "No W.A.Y. on ice!"

As a continually available with errors, some sketches were better than others. An hilarious encounter of Australians abroad done in extraordinarily broken French went with a marvellously executed series of theatrical parodies titled *Play Right* for the highlights of the night's entertainment. A musical sketch apparently inspired by the fact that 1979 is International Year of the Child was on the other hand slightly less dramatic than a piece of misplaced conscience during which forced Alan Cassell to sing 'Nobody'. On the whole things

were much better than they are and on some of the material (what did writers of comic sketches do before they were able to parody television commercials I wonder?) sheer quality of performance saved the day. Edgar Mendillo and Joan Saxbury did most things well, and even in an exception Mendillo's delivery, as borrowed from Comed of Cite Paris's 'Let's do it' with variable and moderately funny antecedents, to the lyric was delightful in itself. As with this, Joan Saxbury's 'Personal PE Lady' sketch was a bit thin on the face so far as comic gain, but very strong on performance merit. Alan Cassell shared in with an excellent Ode to paper plates and Rosemary Blane completed an accomplished cast and sang excellently.

And there's not much more to be said. A good night out for those not so splenetically disposed toward our title self-congratulatory song that NO W.A.Y. includes even such a mildly satirical strain offshoot as NO W.A.Y. on ice!

Diane Cilento on Tour



Diane Cilento will be touring New Zealand and Australia showing her two films *Turning*, made in Turkey and *The Human Race*, made at the first New Age Congress in Florence

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| CHRISTCHURCH | — March 2nd at the Ngaho Marsh Theatre, 48-7069 |
| AUCKLAND | — March 6th at the Kenneth Maxwell Theatre, 30789 |
| NEWCASTLE | — March 9th at the Town Hall, (049) 26-2333 |
| CANBERRA | — March 13, 14 at the Playhouse, (062) 49-8211 |
| SYDNEY | — March 27, 28 at the Union Theatre, (02) 660-1355 |
| ADELAIDE | — To be Advised |

For information contact Sydney 932-4494



Puck, Pyramus, and the Thisbeans in *Comet's Wings*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Segments remained isolated

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

ROGGER PULVERS

A Midsummer Night's Dream, by William Shakespeare, directed by Anthony Asch, at the Lyric Theatre, 1979. (Photo by Michael G. Scharf. Design by Pamela Kasper, New York Theatre Workshop.)

Why was there a lack of excitement and energy in this production? There seemed to be little revelling and a general totemic mood.

Director Michael Aschberry has gone on a rather caustic production in and of itself: the production is essentially an apocryphal one, with character names, lovely costumes, quickly blended in mood, and a serious attitude of presentation. This attitude was especially apparent in the acting style by the young lovers, the Duke, and his lady. In fact, it was the kind of acting that is all too obviously present: Shakespeare came straight against the odds, the second-best (third-best) hand, the 16th that took

root in a primer to its audience but almost lost the memory of lines, and body presenting which communicates little. The lovely Lyander and Hermin, for example, were far too remote, holding hands like kids in a quiet dance.

There was might say, that this was the intended effect to highlight the timidity of the actors and the unconscious of the scenes. But all it did is underline the distance of this segment of the production.

It was in the presentation of the forest that the play had its most "operatic" tone. Both Paul Constant and Robert Lawson, playing Oberon and Titania, are excellent actors. Their voices alone commanded attention. But the direction had Oberon commanding from on high and again the Festival atmosphere was lost. The segment needs to evoke some spirituality, or mysticism. Titania's body movements made us all too conscious of the stage's action.

The stage of fantastic actors is always the reason thing to carry off in this play. It was the most entertaining segment, for sure, led by Hoc McMillan as the Russian. Yet it did not fit well into the piece.

What I mean to say is that the three segments of the play — the noble lovers, the faeries, and

the actors — remained just that isolated segments. The production didn't integrate them well enough so that what was left was a disconnected set of various images. Some of those images were effective, as the wonderful central scene of Jason Hudson as the Master of the Revels, but they led to no visual or plotted continuity. The final scene in the Pelysman segment Pyramus and Thisbe, was performed in admirable dramatic manner. But the tables were set off to the other side and barely reacted to the above. The relevance of this gaudy scene to that was largely lost. The relevance would have been reinforced from the production's standpoint if the stage of nature had continued the acting style of the lovers themselves. If the message of the good, then, would not be missed.

A luxury of another director is the last act, which behind the stage Simon Wadsworth moved was quite good, if a bit too heavy on the whole — it should have followed the stage. The playing of the music, however, was very very fine under the direction of Judith Ching.

All in all, a mild version of the play, at times, usually took up in the third sense, and as others, melodramatic and rather formulaic. However, finally, a good wasn't enough here!

Q & Q **Continued from page 8**

to reveal the majority of its donors' from young people trained by the many excellent teachers in this State, who will then complete their advanced training such as on a scholarship basis.

KAIROS AND CHRONOS

DREW LILIAN, *La Mesa Theatre*

"Kairos and Chronos are two Greek words of great antiquity. Each may be literally translated into English as "Time" (however, the literal translation loses the tremendous wealth of dimension that the events made in their understanding of time as it relates to life. While modern man has made great strides in the art of measuring "chronos" in respect to the clock and the scientific measurements, more subtle, intangible time was never well understood in its thinking and understanding of life-time. "Kairos" (chronos + kai) and did not fall into the trap of measuring the great processes of life by elapsed seconds.

In the pre-Christian Jewish tradition, "time" was seen as an eternal continuum in the context of the moment of critical decision-making, and the taking of action which reflected on the meaning and purpose of life as its community and historical reality. So "kairos" is about the relationship between opportunity and destiny and eternity. A lot of people today would understand "time" on the phone: "The time has come" to mean "It is so quick." In Hebrew or Aramaic/Greek circles, it would be saying "A significant point of destiny demands a critical decision and in acting on that decision the

purpose of my being will be enhanced or stunted." Another application would be in the spiritual area of harvest time. The "harvest" of harvest is in December, whereas the "kairos" of harvest demands the exercise of judgment and action — if the appropriate decision and action do not follow the crop will be wasted. If the "time of harvest" is properly discerned and acted upon the purpose of sowing, sowing, celebrating, planting and nurturing will profoundly influence the destiny of the community. The "kairos" of harvest is time.

In Daniel Kahneman's philosophy, Kahneman and Chronos we find a subtle play on these meanings in the mind of a man who has extremely perverted his "kairos" through the superficial acquisition that "time" is only "chronos." His primary thought about time said all that remains is a worthless clock and self-will as his living fortress in which "chronos" tremendously clings him to his selfish "kairos."

THE CLUB FOR HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE CO

JOHN MULLON

"It is very pleased to have been offered the chance to do a David Williamson play. It's really the man who's got Australian drama on his map. I feel honored to have been asked to play the part of Jack, which has been played in Melbourne by Frank Whelan and in Sydney by Ben Bartlett — so it's a third rate off the cuff. 1972 was the last time I appeared on the stage so there has been a break of seven years. Many

of my colleagues say that doing live theatre was a necessity, but I don't feel the need to do it. I'd like sitting in a bar, a dinner, simply do an after dinner comedy or a good play then I'll say yes."

I think regional theatre is an interesting one, and I can be successful in helping this company succeed. I'm very grateful to have had the chance to do so. The never does any theatre work in Newcastle before, though I've been up here for Picture Show, After and the Fourth Wall. I've never worked with Ross McElwaine but I have every respect for him as a director.

TERRY DOWMAN

"I came to Newcastle because I was offered the part of the coach, which I played in the Melbourne production — it's a short season and I don't go to the theatre as often. I like The Club very much as a play. I don't think people realize just how good it is. Though we played in packed houses in Melbourne the town in Tasmania did quite badly, because I think people didn't realize what it was. These who'd come thought it was over-the-top of course."

In my first show in Newcastle, and I think regional theatre in Australia has to be looked at in a very different way than the English or US model because of the far smaller population. Here there just isn't a tiny theatre people to fill out and so it depends a lot on who's putting on the shows. It has to be done with much more imagination than people in. And we have been told for so long, especially outside the capital cities, on a bit of the big big. One or two large which can lead to very provincial attitudes. We have to keep pursuing and educating people if we want to keep them a bit."

Spotlight

Continued from page 18

Arts and the Arts is small enough to begin to call to permit the time to take place without breaking up the company.

It has been a personal claim for at least since the late 1940s in Australia, that not just drama, but the works of Shakespeare ought to be in the building blocks of such companies as the STC. Sir Tyrone Guthrie wrote about John Gielgud: Robert Lupton, John Ball and Colin George have all put forward the idea in one way or another. Colin George has also articulated the chief artistic problem: Having elected to present Shakespeare "where do you place him?" And he has long led you present him? "You can't just put up Shakespeare and drop him."

Shakespeare, like all playwrights, needs interpretation. Presenting Shakespeare's work in, or for Australia requires interpretation of a very special kind. "Mocking around with Godly," as Sir Tyrone Guthrie has most to call it, just will not do. This matter of interpretation of Shakespeare is a crucial one for the Australian theatre of today. If we cannot see an image of ourselves here and now, in the world, through the theatre, then the theatre is wasting our time and money. Selected programming and

appropriate interpretation can solve the problem. Audiences ought to demand that companies have a point of view. The does not mean a producer's pet project. Audiences too should have a point of view. An open mind is all too often discovered to be a mind in neutral.

The theatre should demand of its public an engaged response, not locked in his ready-to-tackle world on their own terms and to those which determine real life when and if the time dawns. If such an approach precludes the "live" angle can all the better. Theatre should not be allowed to be the ultimate reality's spectacle space. If its arguments take teachers, want "straight" education of them, as George says, they often do for those people they should be quoted. So should those of us who want to get work from outside, that is they might have been overseas. We must be imaginatively engaged in the source if we are to make any kind of interpretation of the play.

If this means doing away with the ubiquitous Reverend Stauden as the starting point for evaluation, then so be it. Why should we not begin with the proposition: Before the production there was no money spent. Now a business filled with human activity was a month after the fact? If the answer is yes, we can then ask, "Why?"

NEXT ISSUE: TROUBLE

Continued from page 17

Llewellyn remarks that the role could develop to great proportions with a longer season. Roberts is able, possibly even tonight every night and this is confirmed an opening by the industry who has, typically, since that production. Any One (the play has been made, after all?)

It is clear that Roberts and Jim share a deep respect for each other as well as a shared love for Patrick White. Interestingly Roberts continues to Peter Carroll on his approach to rehearsal. He needs to be left alone. The other an inspiring tool for the character lives outside the text. The picture shows me an illustration of Jim's state of interpretational acting.

We talk more generally about theatre. Peter and I discuss Handle and small audiences. Roberts mentions Sydney needs one day. Two White plays back to back. The scenes and then caps off the night by saying "what we really need is people who live good lives." And I wonder if that might not be at the heart of Sydney's dramatic problems.

Patrick White, at the opening, responds to a query whether I don't know really I'm much too close to it?

Jim is not to be seen. One gets the impression after talking to everyone else, there are many Jim Shannons — perhaps that's how a director best exists.



Focus on

CANADA

Barry O'Connor and John Tasker

Artistic Directors
steal the scene
in Canada

Barry O'Connor

The 1979 theatre season in Canada is now well under way. But looking back, over the course of the last few months, one wonders how it was managed. Culturally, was the railway cry of the nation's artistic community—and it takes a lot to get the disparate body together. October 26, 1978 was declared National Arts Day, and Canadian performers contemplated watching their services while provincial and federal money was drained from them. The nonstopphone phoned that stage must go on? Inevitably a challenge to the powers of Ottawa, who were so thankful knowing the actors by their very nature could not take their orders under a principle. The shows have indeed given the world the national year playing on the disappointments of disappointment by publishing less of the plays that were to be more because of budgetary provisions. These less were being, pointing out to the nation observer that most theatre had caught the Canadian flag and were planning more productions than they could handle.

In 1978, Stratford had proposed major offerings including an Shakespearean *Macbeth*, Julian Curran and the Women. But among them, and in *Gala Shakespeare Revue* with the President Ruler the opera, *Children's Day* (from John Whinnery), *The Death* as a piece of four *Walden* in addition to especially commissioned new Canadian plays from Barry Pinching and Tom Cote, and another like *Monter and Alford*—"new letters from the Middle Ages" and the American Walter Russell of Voltaire's *Canadian Stratford* the day after of theatre in Canada about the past and the future or not was also being the pastimes of the Canadian Ruler and Opera companies as well. However even that really ordered, three stage Federal examples couldn't cope. Not through a failure of financial resources, but because of a collapse of some unbalanced pair of artists, director Robin Phillips' season one shows had to be dropped. We too remember *Conan Macintosh* at *House of the Doctor* and Larry Pinching's *Onion* has gained, thankfully, extra performances of *Private Lives* with Maggie Smith and Bruce Bedford as the history belpheins. It was very much Bedford's season last year and his debut as a director produced a marvellous *When Ambrosius*, which had in its

production all the qualities Bedford has as an actor: power through containment.

Bedford and Smith were to be at Stratford this year, but was Robin Phillips to have been there. Last summer Phillips moved to England to take in his wife, but leaving as he took his resignation from Stratford. But Robin will be back in 1979 even though at how large a profit it will not close. Whatever happened to that well earned substantial work—world play directors make the phrase cutting for Robin as his director? It was just a human that Phillips wasn't all at all, and that his trip to England had been to develop Peter Hall from his invitation on the South bank. In any case, however, that Phillips will join the directorial of the Lincoln Centre in New York in company with Edward Albee and Woody Allen, among others. It is also true that Phillips is taking on more and more work next year at Stratford in addition to directing *King Lear* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (nominally a comedy). Robin Phillips is a co-director in Stratford's experiment *Love's Labour's Lost*. Stratford never is a changeable of line as it all refers like an afternoon stage. Well, for Cultural-come and direct Richard D'Pon Moody lately. Well, Peter Chance really is coming to play *Love's Labour's Lost* in Stratford.



Stanley Weber explaining the "Art" of hanging to William Somerset in the new Stratford production of *The Incredible Murder of Cardinal Toppo*. Photo: John Muller

Phillips obviously was a great upcountry of his life, and that is perfectly understandable, because as these seasons go to close that can only be done in his hands. Richard Strauss for next year have discussed being across go and changing plans for strong productions. I can't help feeling, however, that 1979 will be a last year at Stratford and that she was recorded especially when you consider that the 1980 season was announced before the 1979-1980 was to have been the year of Robin's retirement.

Artistic directors have had a way of grabbing the news during the year you guess. John Woodville left Edmonton for Halifax where he has just opened in Ontario. Peter Cote has just gone up to take over at Edmonton. Christopher Menzies is taking his leave in Vancouver before coming to night since much needed life into the Shaw Festival in Niagara on the lake.

Last Major artistic director for Toronto Arts Productions at the St Lawrence Centre seems to have an unfortunately with the press and public as Phillips does. Inevitably, however, he will have demanded Major compensation. But there is still there, taking the blame for shows he does as much as for shows he doesn't direct. He is really a supporter for Toronto's ability to know how to use its own theatre to advantage. In fact, the answer seems to have been found spontaneously with the drama of the Year. But Major is still with us, and as he last season of *Shakespeare's Macbeth*, *The New Yorker* drama is *David Mother Curran* and *Queen* shows he is not without increased engagement.

Fortunately, in that season the St Lawrence has already had two successes. *The Incredible Murder of Cardinal Toppo*, a Sherlock Holmes tale spun from Conan Doyle by Menzies, Anton Newlin and Walter Lawrence, and the *Miss Hart* and George's *Island* (which Menzies directed with art and style). There was also a new version of *The Trojan Women*, by Caroline and Greendolyn MacDermid which fairly focused on love and war but was wrongly unconcerned by most critics.

The Miss Hart came in *Queen* especially composed the furthest of old ball comedies from the 18th century, and showed, together with the Toronto production of *Edith Hollander* (Tops in the show, in the high southern style, the Canadian are better in period American than in contemporary American plays, the way some change to most Americans, who clearly Yanks and Comedies in the one breath, when a career in comedy and theatre. But when one compares Canadian and Canadian productions of Toronto

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS STEAL THE SCENE

Bobo, David Mamet and Sam Shepard it soon becomes apparent that something is lost in the translation from New York to Toronto. Perhaps it is the softness and subtleties of Toronto in opposition to the hard world of New York City.

But whatever it is, it shows upon the plays. The *Clerks of the Morning Class*, Sam Shepard's latest, so far from following on his *Cowboy*, *Alone* and *Afternoon* now is a New Theatre presentation, unimpassioned and hypochondriac in a way which once on his hard-edged playing even a heady theatre like mine felt. This is Shepard after the style of Tennessee Williams on the films, not as it should be. The same may be said of Thomas Baker's *A Prayer for My Daughter* which needs actors who will chain a cold and harsh light on the faces and hands who are usually as bad as each other. But our fantasy not our sympathy that the playwright is that Ray Whelan's production of *American Buffalo* by David Mamet recently at the Phoenix Festival, the kind of conscious Mamet's hands gave the dancer which enabled us to then as characters and as an indication of their society. It's a play that is based on the social realism of the ones these plays are being mistaken as.

So it is a kind of failure as it is to believe in the theatre. Two often it is applied to a play like an ornate something that is put on as they end with the audience. In reality, style is an attitude to a text, something that goes down with it. This was pointed by Graham Barker's production of John Matherly's *The Wolves at the Phoenix Theatre*. This was a *Wolfe* without the traditional camp and culture of Rotunda productions "with not a little to be said" suggested Hester, *Reverend* and

has the play been that it will be extended into the next idea as the Phoenix, which was to have gone on *The Education of Benjamin Franklin* Barker with his the reality of the relationships and characteristics. Even so should I say, especially the *Big Lead* Productions is in Robert Rotunda's *non de facto* to the rule, which is available.

Canadian playwright and director Rotunda (even once called on the Canadian scene, he was speaking at the centre of the early Stratford Festival, to develop their own acting style which David Barker would be a local and Lyndal in the world I would apply to his *Calculus* production at his Toronto Theatre where now Canadian plays are problematic in the imagery. If there is a truly uniquely Canadian style it is in a play like *Le Temps d'Être* by Roland Langue. This play celebrates a Quebec woman's life and the anticipation of her last and family. Maybe the Quebecois thought a French Canadian play should not be given an English version. But Rotunda's original production of the piece more carefully in the subject.

There is much to look forward to in the 1979 season and I hope to report on that in another *Phoenix*. *Amateur* Of particular interest will be the National Arts Centre's presentation of John Romoff's *A Floating World*. How will Canadian actors fare with an Australian play? I hear they are heading over an Australian actor for Les Hedley, but it should be an interesting experience in any case. Vancouver had little success with their *Education of Benjamin Franklin*. The problems weren't just cultural. After all most English-speaking cities have a Double Bay like film house, a friend on Chateau.

Canada — A Theatrical Comparison

John Tasker, Australian Theatre Director was invited by the Canadian Government to tour Canada for the month of October last year. He travelled across Canada from Vancouver to Quebec meeting theatre people and exchanging information on the theatre scene in both countries.

Canadians know about as much about Australian theatre as we know about Canadian theatre which was much. And their reputation from countries seem to have progressed to a very similar point with little reference to each other. There is the same beginning, celebration, more and more Canada as playmen finding their way to the stage and being period. There is the enormous distance across the country and the corresponding isolation some of our theatre companies feel. Vancouver's isolation is far away from Ottawa, headquarters of the Canada Council in Park in both cities. As well the Canadian theatre scene is working under the present control of grants by the Canada Council.

Of course there are great similarities. Canada's population is close to 23 million and this population is more evenly spread across the country than the Australian population. At the moment the country is possibly about to be torn in two by the separate interests in Quebec and there have always been the two cultures, running side by side. Canada suffers an undeniable paranoia regarding the US across the border. It is easy to gain the impression that the border between the two countries is seen as a large pre-emptive through which some of the best talent in Canada has been lost. Certainly now in both New York and Los Angeles a large number of western directors and technical personnel in film and television are Canadian. The isolation which we in Australia have so commonly agreed upon in contrast to Canada is a paradox.

I feel that all the performing arts in this country are more expensive and more healthy than in Canada. The Australian Opera would give more performances in Sydney alone than the sum total of performances of opera in Canada (all companies included), and the recent showing of Australian films at the Toronto Film Festival was quite locally a bombshell to those involved in film in Canada. Canadian television has quite a lot of locally made drama but again I feel the quality and quantity is poorer in Australia.

With such a highly cost, it would be impossible to summarize everything I heard in a couple of thousand words. Rather than tackle it



Ken James (Seated) and William Webster (Seated) in *American Buffalo* by David Mamet

aspect of Canadian theatre, I think it better in this article to confine myself to the Canadian playwrights.

An enormous and available depot of help is offered to new and established playwrights throughout Canada. In Vancouver there is an ongoing organization, The New Play Centre, which coming from scratch on \$200 a few years ago, now has a pile of approximately \$250,000. New play scripts are read and from these readings writers are chosen to be workshopped and from these workshops a small number are chosen to be put into full scale production. All these activities involve professional actors.

A great number of theatres throughout the country offer workshops, play readings and annual writers in residence programmes. Some theatres now have full time dramaturgs whose normal activity is to read new play scripts and select playwrights. Remarkably that in twenty publishing houses which print Canadian play scripts, some of these are very small operations but a number are large publishing concerns.

The Playwrights Co-operative in Toronto is possibly the largest publisher of new Canadian plays although most runs are small and are printed by Carleton in other. Textbooks in Vancouver plus fiction children's books, poetry as well as drama but they have more than 500,000 copies of the largest number of published playwrights in Canada.

On rarely this subject will be the playwright, the assistance given and the ability to make his plays accessible in scope, form. I suspect however that the situation runs somewhat similar to that in Australia in the previous one where new playwrights who considered themselves in the early 70's have more chance of having their plays performed than writers.

Bernard Slade the author of *Some Year Now* and a new play *Palatine* playing on Broadway is possibly the wealthiest playwright ever in Canada. He has toured recently in Edmonton, having originally left Canada in the early 60's when he said "the people in charge do not care what gets put on as long as attendance was good. The theatres were mainly run by non-Canadians who did not like my work so any Canadian work seriously I had to get on as fast as I could." Things have not changed basically for the playwrights up here." Slade observed on his recent visit "Canadian plays are getting done but always in little theatres, with little budgets, no live audiences because they can only afford a little screening. If I had returned from *Year Now* to a Canadian Regional Theatre the play would still be sitting in somebody's drawer."

I believe that Bernard Slade is being kindly generous and negative about the situation. Certainly on Canadian playwrights resident in Canada can earn the money for new commands.

Obviously he is correct that most Canadian plays seem to be performed in theatres whose size prohibits them from being profitable. A large number of professional companies throughout

Canada seem to play in houses ranging between 150-250 but even Australia's Consideration had an enthusiastic audience. Most of the larger companies the equivalent of our State Regional Companies make only token gestures to Canadian plays and often there are only to be seen in the small audiences connected to these regional companies, a situation not unknown in Australia.

So despite my comparatively lengthy visit to Canada of more than thirty days which took me to seven major cities, there were few Canadian plays to be seen. Some companies had put to begin their season and which had not scheduled a Canadian play at the time I was there. From around twenty live visits to the theatre, I would have seen on Canadian works all of which were interesting but none were by Canadian playwrights I wanted to see in performance.

To give you some idea of the variety of Canadian playwrighting, let me list a few of them.

Michael Tinsley at 35 is the most important playwright in Quebec where he is regarded by some as a cultural hero. To date he has written six plays, none of them translated into English. His plays have been performed across Canada and the US and one, *Les belles Sœurs* was performed at Paris. Tinsley's impact is partly due to his compassionate disinterest and partly because he introduced total to the stage. Total is the total and direct language of Quebec and Tinsley's use of this language was intended to mean the rejection of French cultural dominance of literature and theatre. Tinsley has said I know what I want in the theatre, I want real political theatre, but I know political theatre is dull so I write fiction.

Daniel Fois is two just upped 30 and is my favourite. He has written only two plays of which *Le déshonneur* is the most important. Set in the shopping rooms of a Montreal department store, the workers get drunk and decide to go on strike. Fois at 30 has decided his dialogue is "rough twenty percent" and Gabor and Mail has written. Fois' work looks not like his, it is fast and full of lighting back and forth lights, a sense of the law against the law.

While these two playwrights cannot well with each other, these other playwrights simply demonstrate the breadth of what matters the Canadian playwrights are now making.

George F. Walker, 39 has written two major plays, a number of them set in his home Canada, and has from early *Angled* (between numbers amongst its characters) *Christy* (seen in the Hallelujah House) and *Aladdin* while *Reverend Monaghan* is set on the porch of a decaying colonial house in the midst of Mississippi. The characters are as New doctus his modernist socialist a porno movie with a Royal Canadian Mounted a police precinct a Chekhovian-dramatic Russian set on real and imagined roles in the chase of the surrounding jungle gradually reveals them. One of Walker's earlier themes, certainly in both these plays is the psychology of time as it affects

the minds and hearts of a young culture.

Also far removed from any culture form is Hiram Alonzo Liss that 38 he was born in Khartoum Sudan of American parents. He has been in Canada since the late 60's and has written a number of plays. A career far to most of his life, he describes his plays as "shorts as full length features." I was fortunate to see one of his plays *Lucy's Sister* which had the working title of *Knights at the Altar*. Liss' images a Gaudi movie about a man and his put on the run in Algeria as well images every side of every idea has been edited into this film. Actors are repeated with conviction that it is remarkable for its beauty. True Gaudi will and the movie well performed with style second among to successfully lead it Gaudi movie movie. I do not think that we will be seeing this play, or any of Alonzo's until the time he is persuaded to come to Australia to stage one of his works. Liss' sister was two years in preparation.

Lastly amongst these Canadian playwrights we should list in Australia a George Rags whose play *The Enemy of Khartoum* written in 1967 is considered in some of the theatre community in Canada as *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* is to Australia. Rags' work with a sense of humour and wit leaves the impression for the city where the film seems to be a previous version of what many residents and the playwrights would consider to be people.

The Enemy of Khartoum has a major influence in revealing consciousness of the "native problem" both for whites and the native people themselves. Rags has a number of plays to his credit.

When some especially popular in Canada certainly in comparison with Australia are documentary style plays created by a Company.

These were in the first instance made popular by Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille. A play which has been well received in a number of cities in Canada is *The First Show*. The *Press* (Montreal) Company spent a summer in a farming region near Chatham, Ontario, gathering material for the play which is the title suggests performers and their lives.

Albion's Theatre Network has been especially active in this field. *Mont Maréchal* and *Shades* have an examination of the housing issue in the oil with *The Search of Africa* had a successful season in New York. *Two Miles Off* another of their works shows the decline of the traditional rural economy.

Paper Whirt was the only one of these collective pieces that I saw. It was having a box office success at the Ontario Theatre in Montreal. Paper Whirt tells of the early on this and the formation of What Co-operatives by the farmers to oppose brokers who had proven rich playing the wheat market. Paper Whirt was a piece written in the theatre. Well played by a small group of actors in fact the original actors who had composed the show a year ago, told us story in short scenes with songs, dancing and even a some little piece of juggling, the most eye demonstration I have ever seen of such was an

operations.

Before I left *Carmen* Press asked me to check on play publishing in Canada. Already, *Carmen* has an agreement with New Zealand where *Carmen* are represented in New Zealand and handles New Zealand plays in Australia. *Carmen* was considering a similar proposal in agreement with a Canadian publisher. I don't think as far as to make any arrangements about the best requirements are in progress and it is possible that *Carmen* play agents will be widely available throughout North America and Australia will be able to read the most of some of the best plays coming out of Canada and hopefully see some of them produced.

Whenever I went to Canada, I contacted with directors and administrators and playwrights the idea that there should be an exchange scheme between Australia and Canada. The best of my suggestion was that should Canadian companies want to include a particular Australian play in their season the playwright and an Australian director could be made available to them and of course the same would operate in Australia with a Canadian director and playwright coming out to an Australian theatre. This idea was enthusiastically received without hesitation by all in Canada as well as by those Australian directors I have been able to speak to as the idea fits in with both in Sydney. It is not a scheme which I can see becoming operational immediately. A number of funds in Australia will have to be secured and throughout the Canada Council and Canadian External Affairs spread the idea we will have to be sure that funds will also be available in Canada. It will take time but it certainly is a more economical way of exchanging our theatre heritage than importing large companies back-wards and forwards across the Pacific.

In the next five years I am sure we will see an increasing exchange between Canada and Australia. I am only one of several Australians who have recently been over there. John Rountree-Latour, Bala, went also in Canada in 1978 and the year before John Curran of the Australia Council visited that country. Several copies of *Theatre Australia* which I took with me were definitely dug out by the end of my stay. They had passed through to many hands eager to know further of what's happening in Australia. In fact, Australian plays are already beginning to permeate in Canada. *The Execution of Benjamin Franklin* was performed by the Vancouver Playhouse towards the end of 1978. John Kennedy's *The Flaming Word* is due for a production by the National Arts Centre, Canada's national theatre company in Ottawa in the first half of 1979.



LETTERS

Continued from page 5

Dear Sir,

In the *Theatre Australia* review of *The Stage Company's* production of *Pina Baus's* *Wendie* during the Adelaide Festival, you allowed a very serious note to creep into what was at its "inimitable production".

The Stage Company is a fully professional international theatre force in Adelaide and is recognised as such throughout Australia because the performers are all members of Equity.

We have been pleased to enjoy quarters for our rehearsal to settle in to work in the difficult area of international theatre. Please do not make the fact in itself by allowing *Theatre Australia* reviews to suggest that we are less than professional in either our philosophy, our practices or our staffing.

Mr. McIntyre, the most concerned without wishing to suggest one less than professional in either their philosophy or practices that to the knowledge no one in *The Stage Company* is in fact receiving any salary for production up to the time.

Yours sincerely
Geoff Pullen
How Securities
The Stage Company
Adelaide

Dear Sir

May I make it clear that Mr. L.L. Bennett's reference to an attack upon a handicapped child in his letter published in your February issue has no connection with any work ever published by my company including the plays *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Very odd* and *The Chapel Perilous* by David Hume.

Yours
Pinky Perkins
Chairman
Carmen Press

Dear Sir

As a professional theatrical director myself from the last two paragraphs of a report in your column "Queens and Queens" (*Carmen*, 1978) headed "Queensland-Queery".

Although the paragraph appears with my report under my name, I did not write them and have no knowledge who did.

I therefore accept no responsibility for the validity and accuracy of these last two paragraphs.

I do not have my reporting on rumours and unverified and unconfirmed accusations as I find this both an amateur and dangerous practice.

Perhaps the editors of this publication should consider the column "Queens and Queens" in much the dubious nature of its content.

Yours truly
Geoff Spencer
Newmarket, Qld

T.A. apologises to Geoff Spencer for the unfortunate error of printing his article without disavowing it from the editorial comment which followed.

Dear Sir

I have read with interest Alison Maclean's letter appearing with some details of my account of the events associated with Sydney New Theatre's 23rd July 1978 performance in the Survey Theatre of the anti-Mao play, *Till the Day I Die*.

Not having been present myself I cannot vouch for the exact nature of the police participation in the incident. The main reasons for my October and November 1978 articles were documents from the New Theatre (mostly written three years ago) and based on my personal accounts. As is well known there are often several versions of essentially changed events, especially after the passage of some years. I welcome Alison Maclean's letter and thank her for providing another view.

Yet another was the *Workers Weekly* report (that is the end of June). The subject was I said that the participation was being constantly interrupted by the police behind the stage, and the question was put: "Should we continue and face the consequences?" I thought the answer was given in clear of "Yes, yes, yes". Jerome Kerry, who was in the audience says today that he definitely remembers seeing police on the stage but does not recall the nature of their "interruption".

Only a wide sample of all the rumours would help to recreate the actual scene. If I had been writing a longer, later work with more time to spare I could have sought personal oral notes with people involved in that and other events mentioned in my articles.

However, in the Survey case for the moment the mistake is that under pressure from the New German consul of the day the NSW Attorney General gave New Theatre's only three hours notice that the performance must not take place and was met of the serious political situation. Alison Maclean's interesting story about her mother replacing a serious accident at the last minute is not only further testimony of the tense atmosphere in the theatre is provided by the fact and the presence of the police, but also serves to emphasize the courage of the whole company whose members were taking prosecution in their own and against political danger and the defiance of an anti-Mao play.

Yours sincerely
Alison Maclean
Melba Road
Potts Point



International Year
of the Child 1979

Children's Theatre: A series to mark The International Year of the Child

CHRIS WESTWOOD started the Youth and Education Programme at the Adelaide Festival Centre five years ago, and in that time has been involved in the creation of Come Out Festivals, the Youth Section of the Adelaide Festival of Arts, the establishment of the Education Department owned Theatre 62, Dollar Theatre Schemes, the alternative to Football Series and the Australia Council/Schools Commission Study of the Arts in Education. She is also deeply involved with Feminist theatre in Adelaide.

Women, Theatre & Education

Despite the historical examples of outstanding children's theatre in Australia, the general impression people have is that it is a "shadowy", "lumpy", "too cerebral", "unachieved area", "poorly resourced", "belated", "low status", "unprofessionally emceed/produced".

I believe that are replicable social and historical reasons for this, and that because of the kind of social changes which have occurred over the past forty years, we can expect to see a considerable metamorphosis in the near future.

A marked characteristic of children's theatre — notable for its absence in "adult" theatre — is the domination by women and educationists. (This is not only an Australian feature but obvious in other countries.) The clustering of women, children and educationists in the one field has produced the kind of work which often the cognates shun. A brief look backwards might explain to a certain extent, why children's theatre has developed in the way it has, and therefore where it might go in the future.

Political, social and economic changes in the nature of production — advanced by the onset of the Industrial Revolution and more or less crystallised by the end of the 19th Century — led to the creation of a new social category, "youth". The introduction of mass education established by the "free, compulsory and secular" Education Acts of the 1870s and the creation of child labour by the 1900s in mass markets containing consequent upon these changes meant amongst other things that:

- children and limited or organised education were increasingly bound together in place, time and ideology;
- middle-class women were freed to work outside the house;
- money was made available for the moral, social and academic welfare of children;
- men moved right away from the domestic sphere, including child-rearing, leaving it almost entirely to women;
- scientific research began to examine human development, with "child psychology" becoming a recognised discipline by 1900.

As a result of these changes, new middle class women were able to move from the traditional domestic sphere into the Civil World

of work. Nevertheless, they moved into areas which were congruent with their so-called "natural" role of nurturing, service, mending, child care. Many moved into teaching, because they themselves had a reasonable education for the times. The socialisation of women's domestic functions has had profound effects which are being felt now and are particularly obvious in children's theatre. For as long as women were and were not working in a traditional yet public sphere (such as education) welfare was hostile that sphere would be dominated by a female approach.

It is not so much a matter of a particular gender dominating a particular field but rather how that gender uses its function. For when women moved into paid education and the arts they carried on their traditional roles as guardians and transmitters of moral and cultural values. This role requires and propagates a certain conservatism and passivity that found in the male dominated "adult" arts world, to better their counterparts. As Elizabeth Leach points out "the self-representing momentum of a role makes it a conservative force, but as long as it contains any moral values it will also be a shaping force". As creators of children's theatre women will play the role of the world, using it as they use all other media within the showcase role for the teaching of moral and social values. Why women, as a general rule, should in some way be of course, dependent upon the social and economic structures of

middle-class society. Patricia Spinks gives a fine summary of the attitudes of 19th Century educated women towards the problems and limitations of their sex, which is born, demonstrates their creative imagination (and is a key to trace their characteristics in women created children's theatre period. Spinks says that such women "perceive some of the injustices of women's position yet nevertheless voluntarily relinquish that claim to a life of independence... the demands of society become less real than the needs of other people... they demonstrate that living is a violation more demanding than self-censoring. Following in her tradition, she transmits her own (and others') oppression, transcending indignation at her lot". Women who are taught to believe in the primacy of feeling and their dependency on men teach that to children and traditionally any form of talking back in children's theatre becomes a good vehicle. Having its high topics and emotions go written back by a male which is assumed to be "typically forward", properly, obedient, desiring chastity, physical, and often mental passivity. Men generally shun the role to women for several reasons... — the chief of which is that women are supposed to be better carers for children, are supposed to know better what children want, need or like, because of their close observation and long association with them. This is not a desecrating factor in itself, certainly, which shows imagination from the world around like social world and not exclusively from the domestic sphere. Children's literature has some of the same traits and it is interesting, if divergent, to note that of writers for adults, most women have written at least one children's book, most men have never done so.

Seeing in stated women's role which is essentially powerless, and noting that children are equally powerless, explains in part why few men find children's theatre an attractive field of work. If the cautious protection and producers of theatre for young people are predominantly female, then it is no wonder that the area in which they work is accorded the same status that they are, particularly when that low status is coupled with the low status of children's caregivers, also upon their lack of training



Come Out 71 Adelaide Festival Centre
Amphitheatre
Photo: Adelaide Newsprint Ltd

power. After all, it is by money that our society creates power.¹ Men, particularly, do not willingly flock to areas that are powerless unless they are really dedicated (and most of them later, not). Complicating the whole thing, and related to traditional women's role, is the fact that so many women for so long have been denied the training and experience in ("adult") theatre that most have had, particularly in key areas such as directing and designing. It is my power here that people describe women-dominated children's theatre as "amateur" (plus blaming the victims?)

Assuming then that women as creators of art for children are most likely to work in "education", it is important to look at the confluence of education and young people's performing arts. It would seem that "education" has compromised some of the creativity, consciousness and moral tone brought to children's theatre but added a new dimension to it: that of blindness. Education is perceived by its practitioners as much of a tool of social control as which have been seen. Stories, plays, film, dramatizations and eventually full scale productions for or by children, have normally been seen as part of children's "education" (either formal or informal, and stories, plays, dramatizations either made or outside the school have had a didacticism, a moralism incorporated in them. Increasingly education has become the prime aim for the development of young people's arts.² The ramifications of that are significant particularly if one examines the considerations in educational change and change in children's theatre. For example, on the one hand, it has been the premisses in education (particularly those educated in the last 50 years) that the theatre world, who have drawn attention to racism, sexism and classism in cultural products for young people. On the other hand, the necessity of the economically powerless children's theatre to attract education funds to keep themselves alive has had some deleterious effects. The premisses educationists in the arts for very good have led to the creation of "youth theatre" and "theatre in education". Though originally born in Britain by dissatisfied theatre people in Australia THE work is clearly the property of education as much as education is THE's market. The disaster factor of the imposition of THE work could be put down to a profitable age at the pointlessness of modern theatre productions and the inherent work production resistance. However, it can be argued that the wholesale ditching of tales, fables and some classics also means the wholesale ditching of imagery and symbolism—the mythopoetic elements that make art "art". If one refuses to put witches into a children's play — and I think one should — because witches may reinforce in children the myth that women are an ultimate symbol of evil, then what else can witches be replaced? It has the current moral taint of early children's theatre has been expanded to equally current discrimination in THE and youth

theatre, but with a new dimension and two dimensions to be aware of education becomes a respectable profession for men (and through it to do theatre for children there is a great difficulty which one has to deal with).

The other side — the need to attract education's money — has also caused some dodginess in children's theatre. If one is forced to negotiate with educationists themselves one may also have to abandon or make one's acceptability some good ideas or approaches in the arts. Certainly, children's theatre is not helping with the ideas and symbols and dramaturgy that good "adult" theatre has. There is also a tendency for those working in the arts in education department projects to be the many teachers, security conscious, wary of experimenting theatrically, and not inclined to move from project to project or from company to company (which means generally have to do it live and which in turn, keep their friends). Teachers generally also suffer from a conservatism and shallow ideological background inherent in Australian education, and a non-specific and inadequate theatre training. This is not teachers fault any more than it is women's fault that they are considered as they are.

The language used to go over one's heads on education's money further heightens all the problems. If women have been trained in arts professionally, and are asked to justify a case for leading children's arts they will argue professionally — traditionally seen as "women's way". They, educated with the pseudo academic jargon of education can only make for emotional, heartstring pulling, cry appeals to the better nature of those in power (and who more or less automatically dismiss the product and the argument with all the adjectives listed at the beginning of this article).



Community Arts
Photo: David B. Somers

So where is the good hope for the future? The odds are in general, though. Firstly the changing role of women might mean all kinds of changes in social practices slowly die away, writers will be better trained in both theatre and education, they will take their rightful place in the social world as men might in the domestic one. Old myths will die out or be resequenced, but new symbols and images arising from some of the old functions of reducing the uncontrollable to the manageable of displaying, as Peter Szondi puts it, "the disclosed predominantly cultural specific and shared semantic systems which enable the members of a culture area to understand each other". The "progressive" influence might sharpen people's consciousness of the intelligibility of some aspects of hegemonic culture, which can only lead to an intellectually provocative approach to art as a way of interpreting and appreciating the world. I take specific encouragement from perhaps Australia's greatest youth director, Helmut Hahnke, when he talks of the need for a grammar which aims to "rephotograph the material of experience" with an awareness of the politics of culture. Or from the new children's literature, where people like Tom Ungerer, William Mayne, Alan Garner are producing significant work. Thus, in the course of the problems of children's theatre the hope for the future can be generated.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 These descriptions were gathered in a random sampling of people who work in women's jobs, including theatre.
- 2 The international children's theatre association, ASITEJ, is dominated by women, as is the American Children's Theatre Association. In no other significant literary association (except perhaps one or two) would there be such an oligarchy of women as appears in Nellie McClellan's *History of Children's Theatre in the US* (Furthman), I believe this is because English speaking countries are the vastness of capitalism.
- 3 Postmodern Theatres: *Freedom, Time, Dances, Projects* and *High* published between 1987-1992: a great deal of work in which child development is presented as a type from phase of human survival leaving the basis of modern child psychology.
- 4 Jane Warr, Elizabeth Adams *World Women's Place — A Study of Social Mythology* (Penguin 1991).
- 5 Sandra Phoenix *The Female Imagination* (Routledge, 1993).
- 6 Children's theatre making Broadway was not stopped by the Depression — but it has flourished in the US. This surely proves the stability of women and children from primary economic movements.
- 7 The recent Australian Council Schools Commission Study of Education in The Arts is a manifestation of the now highly formalised links between children's arts and education.
- 8 Marcelle Ferrer *Mythology* (Penguin, 1972).

Not dancing but moving

D

Dance Umbrella's and Dance Festival's aim often be very understandable requests, but as audiences especially. One can keep its plights to them and being constantly disappointed by the aspects of half-velocity and rain-tickets that must be parking their noses and then, very occasionally, try out dancers something that is fresh, alive and original something that makes all the disappointing worthwhile.

Ballet 78 last year and the Dance Umbrella at the Sydney Centre that followed it were almost devoid of originality, style or real choreographic invention.

However the Dance Week presented at the Sydney Town Hall as part of the Festival of Sydney was built on eye-opening that personally I think, serious consideration should be given to including such companies or groups as the One Extra Dance Company, the Dance Exchange and the Contemporary Dance Theatre whose Queensland at the next Ballet Festival is at not only to create a wider spectrum of dance and introduce a more or less captive audience into the dramatic sphere of the art form, but to inject some new blood into the repertoire as a whole.

State and National companies at Ballet Festivals, by their very structure, tend to be terribly careful about what they put on at these gatherings, but these smaller groups have less to lose by disappointed and can therefore put on their uncompromising acts.

Each of these groups have a definite character, each, however demonstrates their structure reflect the personalities of their directors and/or members.

For Bill Chan, as director of the One Extra Dance Company is a man of both the dance and the theatre. Dance has always been theatre of course, but for him and his company the dance is much a subtextual to the theatre, the story and the drama. For Russell Dumas and Marlene Hazzil, dancers and core members of the Dance Exchange the emphasis is uncompromising on the structure, form and methodology of dance as such and its isolation.

These two groups are poles apart and for the Dance Week, at least, need to the two most extreme of choreographic thinking: the older companies including the Melbourne State Dance Theatre and the Dance Company took their stand within these parameters accordingly.

Chan's most fascinate and gripping work to date is his as I am contained in *Family Portrait*. In most ways than one it is similar to John Hughes' famous TV series *Talking to a Stranger*. As the work progresses, one gradually sees and senses the predicament and the tangle from all viewpoints: that of the daughter, the



Peter Lucas, Lyn Blum and Jason Goldsmith in the Contemporary Dance Theatre's *Flowers and Fountains*.

father and finally, the mother. *Family Portrait* could be said to be an encapsulation of the difficulties of a migrant family adjusting to the different social mores of a new society: it could also be a decent look at the time. For women of age, youth, alienation, lack of communication and the systematic breaking of a marriage or the gradual and painful process of maturation.

There is an "dancing" in *Family Portrait* it is all gentle, but gestures paid down to the community as in Kirova's *Flies*, paid down so that you are caught up in a single movement of an arm, the apical deployment of bodies and the different qualities of a walk or a look.

There are small things that make you like a human being. The repeated way in which the mother reproaches the daughter when she tries to interrupt the beating of a clock machine, the way the mother allows her husband his moments but keeps him short of smothering the father's abrupt shift to another chair when he tries to make it up to her or how he is allowed to go into

a more colloquial or the floor, ignored by everyone else at the party.

There is some vigorous movement for the young boys and the daughter, and a lovely dance that presumably leads to the marriage where gradually the bottom falls out of the movement and the girl is left alone to be comforted by her mother who has been through a hell herself.

It's a pretty depressing piece of work but a nucleus in the mind hauntingly, not merely for the economy and force of its language and construction but for the gripping portrayal it gave from its performance.

There were other works on the programme that had their dances deserving the space around them but which added up to very little, whereas *Family Portrait* with its carefully considered and calculated use of movement for audience time it shows a more analytical intelligence at work, an intelligence that knows what one can do as well of what to employ.

The rest of the pieces at the One Extra's

Dance

performance were not as gripping as its harrowing in *Family Reunion* and Gao knows his day would wait them to be but somehow even the different emotional states and choreographic languages of the other works seemed limited and overly "invented".

J. Whence using traditional Chinese music and a couple of female dancers in what looked like black ink pyamas, just left apart after an interesting beginning and degenerated into what looked like a victory dance of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Kipper Bough. Depositional and happy, its emotional inflections are already on top of a very old of the well known of athletic dance.

Christine Keefe gave us that ballet of hers again and to yet another piece of Michael Carmichael. Keefe had a lot of potential but a just exhausted itself by its own length and by too many less and pieces showed into it, unprepared for and underplayed, just to put the thing out. In the end it just seemed to forget what it was it was trying to say.

The Melbourne State Dance Theatre, directed by Ross Barker and mainly supported by the Furling Riders, showed a great deal of competence as its repertoire gathering a fascinating collection of early works by Barker, Don Asken and Graeme Murphy among others.

Mr Barker's works, despite the long spell about them given by the choreographer before their performance, never rose above appearance level (long for Mr. Barker's example had his two protagonists wending and wringing their way through some basic classical ballet formulae and Eden showed us the floor-rider posing style of "modern dance" as inherited of John Barker who once upon a time created a ballet called *After Eden*.

Graeme Murphy's early piece *Falltime* was interesting in that it showed the early choreography of his style without the fixations and affectations that sometimes miss his work these days. It had all the looking, undulating and odd configurations that we have come to know and sometimes love. The early in it was apparent that Murphy seemed trapped by a habit of finding new forms just for their own sake, probably symptomatic of a choreographer trying to hang in anything and decorating for himself just what can be done. Be that as it may, *Falltime* is, at times, more lapidary and unambitious than necessary.

The other work presented by the Melbourne State Dance Theatre was Don Asken's *Between the Stars*. This is yet another go at should anybody fancy one the ideas and concepts of twenty anthropologist Levi Strauss. It is stuffed full of ideas about social makeup and the role played, significance and meaning of the individual within that society. All of which is not to say that such questions are not ripe for theatrical analysis, they are but I doubt that dance as a medium can be very promising or cogent in dealing with such questions.

For all its meanness *Between the Stars* falls into cluster of more movement with people

down on all fours to simulate Early Man (one go three captives again), a small quartet of Whitey the general having with a mixture of love and caring that looks curiously old fashioned despite its surroundings and a general rather at the end with the individual left alone. For all the attention of the choreography (and it is quite remarkable it is all put at the service of a literal, simple minded and superficial theme so that the total effect comes close to nothing at all).

Something very like could be said about nearly all of the works presented by this old fashioned Sydney based dance group known as *Early Modern*.

There was something called *Pygmalion* created by one Zilda Zuccato that even a mentally defective child of that world had to derive and a monumentally over-the-top piece of "dance theatre" called *Seague Summer* based on Tennessee Williams. *Suddenly Last Summer* and choreographed by Cecily Chivers.

Now, given the fact that even acted performance of the play have seldom made any sense of it to present the play in terms of dance is a total non starter. The play is for all intents and purposes about varying states of mind, almost impossible to translate into dance terms unless one is an Ashton or Robbins. But to go with that idea and try some Martha Graham type grandiosity on the work surrounding it with sets, costumes, music and supposed dance looks to me possibly close to a theatrical death wish. Well, *Seague Summer* did try early on in the genre. It can be taken almost as a rule in dance that the more grand the staging the more obvious the music and the more obscure the presentation the less interesting or even more will be the choreographer in such. There was just too much in it most of it accented and too much of a "fill" that thought about. As I have said before, I just dance I wish to check a parcel of things into a rule-making just because you feel" is there has to be some concern over the scope as a whole and the final product. There was very little thought in *Seague Summer* and it emerged a tangled mass accordingly.

One work by Ross Barker that came near to saving their reputation was *Producers* by Norman Haft and set to the first part of Stravinsky's *Fire of Spring*.

Despite some heavy old quarantines in construction the work flowed easily and dramatically it was also refreshing in that it showed that the Fire dance, necessarily need huge masses of dancing dancers, to make it work in Haft's version it was merely a lone dancer with little or no women. Knowledgeable companies and interesting *Producers* was danced with excellent execution and notable pacing by Brenda Mitchell and Sandra Griffin. It was gradually revamped by Sato recently's group making sense of course, but then nearly all versions of the ballet always have been.

(However, there was like highlight in the season (apart from the Dance Company and Dance Exchange, none of which need state and

that was the appearance of the Contemporary Dance Theatre from Queensland). Peter Russo, the solitary male in the company and sometimes of a guiding light, assumes the role of Russell Dumas that sometimes follows by rather more of the New Dance) in showing the CDT new ways and forms in which to move, and that could be said to be the reason of one of the company is a complicated web "moving" not "dancing".

The latter concept is a dangerous one in untrained hands because it not follows its reasoning in the very end. One would see the absence of all-dance companies and the absence in the same society of a deeper comprehension of moving. Dance would cease to be an art form and more a basic component of life. As it is the New Dance brings moderns unconsciously back on themselves forcing them to associate objects, spaces and movements in their own mind.

It is a trend in art that reshapes theatres and establishments and a more civilisable in terms, church halls and city squares. It is also a trend that does people to dislike it. A lot of them do and consequently the New Dance is very much a minority interest, but is apparently very happy being such. Its myriad splinter groups and solitary prophets, even their efforts with a solitary appreciation that of the former three religious groups. Anyway, most of this deep stuff must be left alone.

The CDT already is not as total as that of the Dance Exchange but it is very clear there is however an unbroken bond between any there in the world. Probably the most representative point in the CDT repertoire (that I know of at present) is *Shif* (Work formulated for the company by Russell Dumas with the assistance of seven American New Dance choreographers. Each of these contributed a short phrase of five "elements" each, a short being an approximation of a chore phrase or combination within a certain time span in the old classical sense. These elements are executed and permeated throughout the dance and between the dancers not to the "understanding" manner of Contemporary but in a streamer severely edited way each dancer having to be aware of and dependent on the other.

What it all amounts to, for the sake of argument, is an exercise in serial or abstract choreography. Such games as speed, direction, flow and relation being created by the dancers at its time, changing and defining neither itself and within such progressive performance. It is all directed in intention and takes a careful and sustained concentration from the audience to follow the idea. In the end it has the effect of a Cartesian Algebra applied to the human body in space, a theoretical X-ray applied to the very skeleton of pose and placement and form.

It is almost beyond the limit of literary analysis of course, what can probably be supplied is a lot of background information, a navigation chart if you will, but with this, form of dance, probably more than any other form of theatre, it is the audience that does the work.

Exciting Bolshoi, mixed Fidelio, well matured Herring



The year's summer holiday season at the Sydney Opera House has a very low key affair all round, with four revivals out of the six programmes presented, and only one new production: a concert hall version of Beechoven's *Fidelio*. The main evening and off-bus operatic experience of the first half of the season was provided by the four concerts, in part semi staged, by seven singing stars of the Bolshoi Opera performing excerpts from a fascinating array of Russian operas, most of them all but unknown outside the Soviet Union.

This was a genuinely exciting, genuinely off-bus evening in largely unfamiliar operatic company. Many of the voices were far from good as was much of the music and there was a rather dull, ham-fisted manner of mood about it all which could only reinforce the popular image of the somewhat dull and colourless Slav. But there was a skillful mixture of evening glow in where he and lady, conveying with some staged scenes—in costume, that is, with appropriate stage action and a modicum of neatly portable props, and sometimes a projection on an overhanging screen to reinforce the mood of the moment.

Russian, understandably being a closed book to most Western opera singers, the demands of learning possible Italian, French, German and English stretching them to the limit, it is not surprising that there are no more than three composers (Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich) and four operas (*Eugen Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *War and Peace* and *Boris Godunov*) in the Russian repertoire which require anything like regular exposure in the West. Problems of translation obviously still loom very large in the way of international perform-ance of new work, using Russian lib-

Russian also being one of the more severely neutral of languages, but of surprisingly liquid vowels and nasal, not percussive consonants, it was a singularly inadequate, slightly annoying experience to sit through an evening of glomus, as it were, into slightly comic musical certain rendered all too vivid because of one's utter incompetence to follow these precise meaning. Even totally nonsensical operas, from most cases, over a few years of performance going in comparison of only rudimentally a good many snippets of German, French and Italian, and it is a particular pity that those who attended these concerts, deprived even of such rudimentary aids to understanding, were not given more adequate explanatory material in the printed programmes.

Ideally of course, they should have had bilingual texts of each excerpt as it was they got, only at best a brief summary of the situation and suggestions, and sometimes they didn't even get that. And to make it worse the house lighting level was on low between items it was impossible to read even what was there without the aid of a torch or the naked flame of a cigarette lighter.

The highlight of the semi staged scenes in these concerts came right before interval, with an extensive excerpt from Act III of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Priglasenie*. Because Michael Minkov played the role solo, bass Boris Mironov (Igor) carried the Khori Kamchatka, and tenor Len Kabanov the secondary tenor, tracks Dylor all went excellent, and the music and drama flowed with sufficient clarity on the language barrier didn't matter.

There was a real fascination in the scene from Dargomyshev's *The Stone Guest* in Russian among the Dore team every, if correct set in a juxtaposition dominated by the statue of the

Chimera, where the indestructible Gari (played in a week, no less) was Boris Aron when she came in just flowers on her father's grave. The music was wonderfully, probably the whole opera would be more than a little tedious, but the particular excerpt stimulated the album of the music with the charm of the recognition of an old friend.

Inevitably there were snippets from Boris Godunov and Eugen Onegin, one to hear live in their original context, though I found Mironov's performance of Kabanov's son from *War and Peace* less powerful and melodious than Neil Warren-Smith's on the production which opened the Sydney Opera House in 1973. I suspect the part of Kabanov is too high for a true tenor like Mironov. The young baritone Alexander Vlasov, who sang Onegin in the two excerpts from that opera included in the first half came back in the second to double with two vocal skill and sheer showmanship in a solo bouquet of three acts in my book he, and Mironov and the mezzo-soprano Nadezhda Tolmacheva, who sang a marvellous part of *War and Peace* and Mironov's son the end of the evening, were the most consistently rewarding of these Russians to hear in.

Appropriately, perhaps, the concert concluded with a fascinatingly beautiful duet from Tchaikovsky's *Priglasenie*, sung by Kabanov and soprano Nina Petrova. Excerpted from no less than six of Tchaikovsky's best operas with based in this concert, collectively presenting an important side of his musical personality much more effectively than it is usually heard in the West.

One must also give a good deal of the credit for the success of the evening to the producer, Chig. Mironov, who kept things moving



Shostakovich (Mrs. Woodhouse), John German (Vasco) and Elizabeth Farnham (Lady Bolshoi) in the AGO's *War and Peace*. Photo: Franco-Cass



Valerie Minkov and Len Kabanov in *Priglasenie* of the Bolshoi Opera Co.

Photo: Lennox-Grove

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smoothly and efficiently so that what was indeed a long night in the theatre seldom seemed so. And of course conductor Paul Mansoor, who created some very authentic-sounding Russian sounds from the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra, and the audience could be regarded as firm and the Russian singers with evident enthusiasm.

The concert hall *Fidelio* produced by Berndt Bruchmann and designed by Alan Linn, was a very mixed bag indeed. One of these disappointing nights in the theatre when one is alternately provoked and disappointed, appalled and scandalised. The opening performance was exceedingly windy (as is technical detail), things were musically worlds better by the time I returned to hear the next last one.

I still have a nagging worry about Carlo Felice Cifarelli as a conductor of such a deeply Germanic work as *Fidelio* just as I have considerable reservations about the work itself. Seen as a hilariously political tract about freedom and tyranny, it makes perfect sense as a dramatic entity, or a study about the triumph of moral devotion and liberty over evil. It is a good deal more worrying. The emotions and the music are extreme and brutal and without subtlety. The plot develops with lightning speed in passages of spoken rather whispered dialogue, then everyone stands about, rooted in the spot for an excruciating moment as the processions of damned play. The final scene is just about just-awake as, with everyone standing about and regarding at the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil.

Properly, according to Bruchmann's original *Fidelio* the entire first act in this production takes place in the prison courtyard in which his father who divided it into the two scenes which are more continuously seen on stage today. Soldiers incessantly pace the balconies of the concert hall as throughout the dramatic settings and groups which encompass the first scene, the domestic warmth of Rocco's kitchen is replaced by a trap, forbidding passage adorned by what are apparently whispering girls surrounded with dangling blood-stained masks, which Bruchmann is required to finish with a full breath at one particularly hellacious stage of the proceedings.

The overgrowth of the producers has less dramatic effect than I would have thought possible. One of the great dramatic moments in all opera is aumbled away, with some of the producers shuffling out of a grasping hole in the steps across stage as if attending a neighbourhood picnic, and others leaving themselves out through two obviously unguarded staircase ports further downstage. Surely the Powers of the opera would have had the scalp of not the very head itself of any ruler responsible enough to be so lax on security.

The claspnet scene is more effective as it is staged through Rocco's really should not be required to dig a hole with a pick as an obviously wooden stage floor in full view of the audience, far better to put him behind some kind of



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barren, as was done in the last production so he can credibly appear to be usually despising a grove.

But the musical remains of the final scene swept away just about all one's reservations about this *Fausto*. Even on opening night, it was very good by the end of the season, it was superb singing. Both the duets and the monologues, swelling in the open acoustic of the concert hall, were making super-abundance of use of an answering material, never before have I heard these perfidious bellies in a musical house.

The actors were largely new, this season, as Australian Opera *Fausto* performances. Except for Donald Shanks' *Alceste* lovers were more important than before, John Shaw's *Phaeton* (a good friend) and Robert Allman's *Don Fernando* (a superb friend, I had not seen any of them in the relevant roles before).

Amos Avonin was an excellent *Jacquino*, and George Fowles an equally excellent *Margherite*. It is hard to accept such a deeply feminine woman as *Margherite* Richardson in a part role such as *Fausto*'s *Alceste*, and the part does not really suit her vocally either, but she looked me into a willing suspension of disbelief in the evening program and she gradually revealed the remarkable inner strength of the character she was portraying.

And Donald Smith, making his debut as *Fausto*, was rather too belated at opening, though the improvement in his performance during the run was quite dramatic. It was finally a far better performance than I had dared expect from a actor so rightly renowned for a set stopped in the *Vendetta* scenes.

Smith suffered heavily, in this *Fausto*, from just about the only lapse in the effectiveness of William Alder's lighting: lying flat on his back with a right fitting costume he said with his eyebrows well fed hairs could hardly pretend to be smothered, and he looked intensely like the smothered friend on the bench in *Don Chisciotte*.

the light up. From a complex and expanded over the performance area was excellent — from the blood red peaks of the tapestry, representing just that, in the deepest shade of light down the stairs to the dungeons to the final moments of celebration when the house lights came slowly up to full strength, visually showing the audience staff right into the proceedings on stage.

This year's *Albert Fleming*, which opened the winter season on a very low key note, was a well-mannered version of the *Fleming* that has been in the Australian Opera repertory since the 1976 summer season, always with *Constance* over in the role role. Oddly enough, perhaps the great improvement in this year's presentation was in the performance itself.

Albert is a far less part, one of the impossible to cast effectively because he must have the vocal capacity to sing a big, not always easy, role yet be able to portray convincingly a adolescent innocent who suddenly, during the course of the opera develops into much much more. He is all too shy to start off with, and has to survive the even after initial all his coming in *King of the May* and the party which follows before he can turn into a sensible young man. He is bothered with a particularly odd attack of the hiccups as a final endgame even after he has drunk the libretto based with him that is to release his inhibitions and lead directly to his emancipation.

It takes great skill to maintain any sort of credibility of character through all this and *Fleming* managed it beautifully this time round. In it he was helped no end by John Pringle's *Sad* the character and his slightly phony, phony friend *Henry* played this year by Jennifer Birmingham, are the catalysts who provide *Albert*'s declaration of independence.

Pringle who was making his debut in the role, seemed to excel slightly more in the burlesque scenes in the party than *Lynette* Thomas,

who played the role in this production, and thus lost ground in part to the party scene by finishing the main final and dragging him in before leaving *Albert*'s dumb. His performance, perhaps, coupled with the greater depth of *Constance* presentation into the character of *Albert*, finally brought this *Fleming* to the distant peak of its performance form to date.

Several of the cabarets were played by the same performers as before, with reinforcements as about two and three. *Shakespeare* was again *Mae Westworth* (the school teacher, laughing but way through the proceedings more often than not accompanied by a *Ballet* of their *John* *Gorman* was a well meaning but slightly naive voice *Robert* *Grant* an offensively pompous mayor. *Nail* *Warren-Smith*, a suitably well informed and slightly dumb policeman. *Rene* *Reed* was a little more hysterical. *Mae* *Herring*, than before, presumably occasionally so under the probing hand of resident producer *Ellen* *Neelbach* than under the original producer, *John* *Con*.

Alexander McAdam was an excellent new *Harry* and *Shirley* *Bagg* an equally efficient housekeeper as *Lynette* *Seaton* if in a slightly less comfortable way. *Elizabeth* *Forsyth* worked very hard at being an effective *Lady* *Bellows*, but lacked something of the mysterious confidence that is used by *Nathan* *Grant* in the same role previously.

Shirley it was an excellent renewal of a part whose needs grew on one with repetition, as in the past with all good works of art, and particularly opera in a slightly odder order, such as *Shirley* will in to many opera parts even today. For bringing it all together once again conductor *William* *Reed* and his small band of instrumentalists from the *Elizabethan* *Sydney* *Orchestra* deserve the highest credit — *Shirley* *Herring* was a rather low key but not mean for this year's winter holiday season at the *Sydney* *Opera* *House*.



The Adonis Fausto

Photo: William Mowley

Aus Shorts on Unemployment

Henry Carr and Ray Prasad in *United One*Frank Macklin in *Island Shanties*

A selection of short films by Australian film-makers on the subject of unemployment and the role as they affect young people earned public viewing at the Sydney Film-makers Co-operative Ltd in Sydney, and I saw four of them there. They are *United One*, Penny Vassant Collective colour, 22 minutes; *Play Role*, Brendon Sheikh colour, 20 mins; *Island Shanties*, Ian Allen, b and w, 13 mins; *Island Shanties*, Tim Woolmer, colour, 13 mins; *Reaching Not Enough*, Eustial Probst, b and w, 20 mins and *A Touch of the Trenches*, Phil Bull, colour 10 mins. The two last were not available.

I hope they all get a showing, either in cinemas or on the television screen, because they have something to say, and they say it in various tones of voice. One of the more noticeable shared qualities is the tight knock the ball approach thought, the very concerned, the pleading below and the unfathomable layer that may become famous. The film that comes closest in providing a flat as the table is *United One*, but it also has the most beautiful. It is also the most

various."

United One was started as a youth project, a project that can cover everything from commercial gardening to guitar playing. Halfway through last year a youth worker in winter with youth employed by the Landshards (a suburb of Sydney) Council and funded by the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services initiated an examination of unemployment in the area.

With the help of a subsidy offered by the Commonwealth Employment Services and a recent graduate of the Film and Television School, Gill Leahy, six young unemployed people set about teaching other young unemployed people with a budget of 15000 how to use film and camera, sound equipment etc. Three young film-makers came in to help and the film as far as I can make out was a spin-off. Whether the film made by the Penny Vassant Collective became more important than the Collective's maintenance of the guitar taking over the serious business is anybody's guess. (It

any case it is an engaging, cheerful film which also happens to say a lot of things about what it is like to be young and out of work. Though, not as hardly words necessary to say able to offer substance.)

Play Role is about the kind of young people who in the end determined by lack of identifiable purpose, don't mind being out of work as long as they can live fairly well and keep-out of traps at the police. They are operators, not quite criminal. They collaborate each other. They are happy, they going but nevertheless alert to danger from outsiders. They live on the fringe, doing a day's modelling here and there, working whereby selling profusely viewed on front of a television set. *Play Role* is well made, looks very good, and is a clear demonstration of a certain view of life which results being an attitude. It only in the most superficial way, and that on your feet. As with *Island Shanties*, the usual recording falls off when it comes to dialogue.

Island Shanties is a good light little story, unintentionally told in black and white with three lively believable people. The principal character is Bob, a long haired, strongly built youth with an acne pitted skin who comes from the country to the city to try for a job. He turns up at a meeting that in the present dispensation of the mass is gathered, deep on the sofa, spends hours in telephone boxes applying for jobs, emerges himself with a motor bike good enough to ride at Aquatic one-hour the gathered complaining of his presence and takes off when his date changes at last turns up on the road again. A one track service, but not the hopeless story very well told.

Island Shanties is a very lively splendidly photographed film about a handful of young men working at the Darling Island railway goods yards in Sydney, and the truck loading, locomotives which have to be moved as fast as possible over a mass of tracks. To do this the young men have to become their masters, working them in motions work calls. The locom are top and dangerous. The new clown who takes the job gets a short lesson in what to do and how to do it, then joins a gang. "Congratulations you're a shunter," says the boss. "Here's your plans." One of the boys remarks "You don't know what you're doing, but you do it. They'll let you break the rules to get the trucks out and make no more mind something goes wrong. Then your life is on the line."

The film conveys very well the tight second coming and the rules that have to be taken on several days as well as the fact that the musical sound-track from Terry Wilson sounds fine for scenes that is always exciting, and often funny.

Money Movers — Bloody but worthy.

The Money Movers has a lot going for it — a grand well-laid outly industrial setting, pace, authentic business of the way, distinctive lead portrayed so expertly by Australian central notable performances from unsung actors and an evocative soundtrack.

It also has too much blood. The sight of the first almost crucified human corpse is utterly shocking (as is the film's tone, in conclusion) in a matter of half an hour so much blood is spilling across the screen and offered in close-up to induce first repugnance then boredom and then a kind of reluctant acceptance. This is the artistically damaging result of no-one awarded credit.

You have, only so far, an audience splashing on water in a large big film, because the action is such a parody of aggression and defence to realise that audiences may do the same during the final third of *The Money Movers*. When the blood is not actually being spilt for the bones being crushed together the film scripted and directed by Bruce Beresford and produced by Alan Carroll for the South Australian Film Corporation with substantial financial support from the NSW Film Corporation, is remarkably alarming. It is about the planning development and carrying out of a \$10 million bank robbery by people more qualified to do it — the staff of a security organisation.

The plot is based on a novel of the same name by Denis Mahony, who was, for a long time, head of his own industrial security company. So the detail is right, and is in the detail of the lifting of \$10 million in notes which makes the film so fascinating. The other plot and a considerable plot is in the director's control of these details. The action is remarkably carried out in close-ups, limited soundings and the action hardly ever gets out of the low-angle, used almost all. Even when the company drives are out on the road the feeling of large strong bodies combined in tight unbroken groups with guns and bundles of keys and further enclosed in mobile but actual positions, effectively moving the scene.

Bruce Beresford is a director who has proved he can do many things well. He may not always like what he has to put his hand to, but the recent preliminary — *Two Boys Making* from Don Chaffey, *The Carriage of Women* from *The Money Movers*, with *Breaker Morán* and to be next up. His control seems to be for handling people, rather than of others, much of the story given: packs of schoolgirls with the latter and of packs of animals and professional standards as in *The Money Movers*. He has a great eye for the language of special groups and a great eye for their movement. For instance, the same settings in *The Money Movers* have



Ed Deveraux leads a punch at actress Anna Lillis in *The Money Movers*

spilled industrially

He is less adept with the minute detail in fact the relationship between Eric Jackson (Vincent D'Onofrio) and his wife Denise (Diane Lane) is only half defined and the scene in their country cottage which is meant to encapsulate that relationship is unexplained to us, as if the director wanted to get it out of the way as soon as possible and get on with the action. As his Waterbrook, said in David Copperfield, "Other things are all very well in their way but give me blood."

He does better with an anonymous encounter between Andy Raymond, a company spy, and Tony Brown, an insurance spy.

Bruce Beresford has shown performances from some of his veteran actors that actors of the Cleveland crime series will find as hard as believe. It must be that the film is always there just struggling to get out by means of a better script and direction. Among those who stand out are Charles Tingwell (who perhaps should be allowed to forget the appellation

"Red"), Ed Deveraux and Lucky Gallie in the roles, impressively of *Myra Hindson* the woman's crime king, Martin the man who drives for Denise's father, and Conway the manager of the counting house where millions of dollars are stored into pay envelopes before being shipped to the industrial clients.

Bruce Beresford with his peculiar quality of violence, removing emotion and thought process without making the usual faces, and Vincent D'Onofrio's way is by others who are bloody, bold and evocative, not, usually (Money) in a fashion that says Ray Marshall who calls his work meetings to his own lobby arrangements. Alan Carroll as having the best performance with good connections in the film and out of it, and his Pyrexia Griffiths, whose police career in Britain was checked, we are given a couple of hints, by a touch of quizzical.

As with almost all local films today, as *Money* is technically perfect, not least the imaginative camera work and lighting of the atmosphere Don McAlpine.

The Myth of the Troubadour



These people are as likely as anyone else, perhaps more, to mistake the significance and circumstances of the genre of medieval art that we call troubadour song. The notion that there was a being called a troubadour who looked like a wandering minstrel and set off along the dusty roads of central Europe with his lute string over his shoulder is so widespread that it may be hoped to age in eras. There were, no doubt, wandering minstrels and, indeed, wandering minstrelship of all kinds in the period. Students of the subject must see, however, that they were not troubadours. For that matter, the use of the word *troubadour* to denote a professional writer or writer in the contemporary phrase "I am a troubadour" seems to have been unknown.

There was a great of troubadour song and, later, of *trouvère* song, but these words were by no means used unambiguously or consistently. We are probably more accurate in historical terms if we simply refer to the songs normally described as being troubadour songs or *trouvère* songs simply as medieval songs. The labels are useful however in that they identify for us in a tidy sort of way the kind of songs produced by and for a special kind of society that flourished in the Provençal culture of the 11th and 12th centuries and sometimes later and differently, in northern France.

The person who wrote troubadour songs was a part of one of the most highly developed of European societies of the last thousand years and

was much more likely to be an aristocrat (sometimes a count, duke or even king) or a prince, great nobleman, the prototype of aristocratic society rather than anyone so underprivileged as a wandering minstrel. Which is not to say that wandering minstrels or even wandering minstrels never performed troubadour songs merely that they did not be distinguished from the makers of those songs. There is some evidence, in fact, that in call a person who was admitted to the honourable company of those who wrote troubadour songs a minstrel, a jester or a jongleur, was as easily as much in could be employed.

I must say that if anyone had asked me a few years ago which professional musician of our time was likely to get the ring of *troubadour* confined I would have named Marianne Faithfull as a likely candidate. She seemed to be trying to live the myth of the troubadour, travelling with a lute, writing songs, presenting long programmes of songs of all types and periods and talking of herself and her acquaintances as modern troubadours. Someone must have been telling her a thing or two as the genuine *troubadour* life has been lively, vigorous and natural membership have been complemented by a deeper exploration of tradition.

For whatever reason, *Radio 4* record *The Great of Provence* (HMV CSD 3716) is one of the most satisfying and balanced recordings in troubadour and *trouvère* song on a single disc. I am inclined to think it may be overvalued in the record of the moment. But has it been chosen partly in seeking out the *troubadour* melodies in their surviving form with substantial melodies and antiphones and in song parallel and close harmony. No one is in a position to say that this is exactly how the songs would have been performed but the historical evidence, such as it is, seems to favour some such sort of bold and lively reconstruction rather than a more waiting for unaccompanied monophonic performance. But does not go beyond the practice actually employed by the most highly regarded performers of early music.

He owns solo singing has character and has without stages and the vocal instrumental work is not only musically pleasing a product of the natural musical good sense I mentioned earlier but also as plausible, as any other performance of the music now available. But includes some of the better known melodies and songs (very few of them however) recorded as satisfactorily as they are. And includes excellent notes which point of proof is needed that the values of this disc are no happy accident. The circumstances on songs of love has given enough variety to remind us that comedy here was only one of the subjects, even if

it was the most influential of the subjects chosen by the writers of troubadour and *trouvère* song.

A set of records equally produced by the late David Munroe and his Lady Muter (Columbia of London for EMI) and now issued by the World Record Club (WRC 8384) I should might well from its title. The *Great of Provence* set is dealing with much the same subjects as these on his disc. The *Munroe* discs are in fact complementary and take up the story, of course, of the *troubadour* and *trouvère* periods.

The set begins with a disc almost entirely devoted to the work of the 11th century composer and poet Guillaume de Machaut who was not only a composer in the medievally wrought polyphonic style of the time but also a person who sought consciously to revive, or continue the tradition of the troubadour song by writing monophonic, songs in medieval forms. As I happen, Machaut is represented here by the polyphonic pieces which seem to us more to represent 14th century music than it is medieval music.

The second record of the set is devoted to music from late 14th century French culture, music which evidently is more elaborate and does not so make the mistake of supposing that music here was proceeding on any constant evolutionary plan in the last thousand years in that the music of people in earlier centuries was necessarily simple and slow because they lived a long time ago. Quite a deal of the music was unaccompanied or involved complex and elaborate procedures until the 15th century and it may well be that this is the first century equipped to experiment to understand the capabilities of the music of the *troubadour* song.

The third disc brings us into a house of relative order the classical style as a new series of the music, written by two of the greatest masters of music, Palestrina and Bach, during the period of the great European renaissance in the 15th century. Melody of — of our standards — current classical though not necessarily any the better for that. Both in security into the period music world of 14th century medieval art. Does a represent the missing Middle Ages of the music of the Renaissance? The truth is probably that it contains something of both. Machaut and his performers present all of the music in medieval performances in combination with the latest operations in style.

Persons who want to avoid some of the subjects that used to be considered when one plays recorded music makes that the lady's company will find incidentally that these discs are not only good for listening to in themselves but also a valuable music for those moments of European history.

Myths and National Identity

Ray Lawler: *The Doll Trilogy* (University Press)

Patrick White: *Big Toys* (University Press)

Edited by Alison Sykes (Can): *You Hear Me Talking To You* (University of Queensland Press)

Lincoln Hanger: Edited by Alison Sykes: *JD and Other Plays* (University of Queensland Press)



A nation needs myths, and a sense of its own identity and drama can provide them by exploring the National Character. This myth has been one of the guiding principles of Australian drama. Unfortunately exploring national myths often comes at the expense of national delusions and continuing national prejudices. The new middle-class obsession with *Oliver* in the plays of the late 1970s and early 1980s were steps off the old blocks in the playwrights were delighted to see.

Journalist of the Seventeenth Doll in 1973 seemed possibly to be exploring and testing an old myth. If through two brilliant Australian bushmen-transcendents, strayed into the drama of Caribon and forced them to face the realities of urban Australian life. They last (Typically, and sadly, as Anne Summers has pointed out, the Dream was exposed through two women, one lost *Oliver*. The men could slither back to the bush usually suffering but *Oliver* was the one who was destroyed.) The confrontation between the image of Australian life represented by Ray and Barney and the reality of living in a modern city does give the play much of its original power.

Reading *The Doll Trilogy*, then, is an odd experience. In the 1970s here is Ray Lawler

going back and testing the old, already successfully defunct myth null brother. The work being already established in the *Doll* is becoming a strangely ironic gesture in his introduction to the plays. John Sumner is doubtful of the idea that *Big Toys* could have brought audiences to see the whole trilogy, and maybe rightly, but certainly could have done so.

The *Doll* certainly remains one of the best Australian plays, and *Big Toys* and *Other Toys* are worthy companions for it. They may not play slightly self-consciously knowing the *Doll*. There are scenes which are so obviously writing up the famous scenes and images in the latter — the *Doll* themselves, the "look my brother" *Bubba*. *Oliver*'s dream of the lay-offs, and so on. Another disturbing effect is that Ray and Barney do not improve upon acquaintance. Their awful argument, sexual, racial, narrow minded assumption of superiority is part of the myth which Lawler is exploring, and (unintentionally) questioning, but over these plays it gets a little weaker. And again there is that nagging, obnoxious quality about it — a suggestion that they are just slightly livable like boys, like Norm and Don and Mal and the rest of those who, if left to see the place might, as Patrick White suggests about other different characters, let the world come down around their own ashley play with their toys.

Patrick White's collection on the cover of *Big Toys* is a terrible view of the nation heart. Its order to imply that Ray & Barney have racist hearts is that the Australia they represent had a completely racist heart, but *Big Toys* is substantially well and concerned, after the *Doll Trilogy*. It is ironic that such a strong defence of the spirit which moves man to rise above his superficiality should take the form of such a brutal, brilliant comedy of manners and a very probably this becomes contradiction which caused disappointments, thus restraint included, when the play first appeared.

It is said to be above criticism, raising but it's very subtle. Rather and May Benington play with their big toys (such to cerebral mischief). Perhaps the worst the Labour Party *The Doll* Theatre and try to reduce a good union man, Terry Lopez, into joining them and giving up the good fight. They was the best but it is implied or hoped that he will wear the war.

Throughout there is an almost mystical feeling of the value in the human spirit, and a good started enlightenment — as Bob Horne said, "Don't let the bastards win." Theaching sense of loss and responses which May took when she moves out through the proximity of the brother's skyline into the black area of road beyond is felt by the audience and reader, just as in Sydney anyway, the black neighbourhoods blow down on us

all. Perhaps a response to the play is determined by how much you like the big toys yourself — which may not make a good polemical writing for the audience at the Old Tote in 1977. But anyone who had doubts then should at least now take the opportunity to reconsider.

It is impossible too, to read the script without hearing the quarrels as Kate Fagan, Arthur Dayman and Max Colton — for whom it was apparently written. More than most published plays, this is a record of a production. There are many small "director notes," from the Sherman, done, throughout the text explaining how certain moments were staged or how certain lines were delivered. The effect is of a very precise, almost linear script produced by a small group of people, about led by a master.

In the company of Lawler and White other Australian plays are bound to seem less significant, which is a pity because an anthology like *Can't You Hear Me Talking To You* edited by Alison Sykes has some fine historical writing in it and will be much more useful to people looking for good, readable Australian material. It is a collection of eight or so plays in different styles, which demonstrates that we have come a long way since the old antiquities of these plays. For another theatrical society, Robert Lind's *Balance of Payments* particularly, shows a vivid theatrical imagination and should prove if not again such proof were needed, that you don't need to be Strindberg to be serious.

Lincoln Hanger's *JD and Other Plays* also edited by Alison Sykes, is probably more of historical interest. At a time when a man not so young as it is now Lincoln Hanger began collecting, editing, producing, writing about and writing Australian plays, and the volume is a lasting memorial. Her plays have died, though and it is unlikely that companies will now want to take them up. They have the slightly patronising way talking. Significantly is or for the audience which characterized some of the best comedies writing of the mid-century before there were any professional theatre to write for. In *JD* and the parodies her "low-life" characters quite horribly.

Theatre Australia

Binders and T-Shirts Now Available!

(Details on page 4)

GUIDE

A.C.T.

CANNBERRA OPERA (07 6346)

Opera in the Schools Series
Sat The Scepter Who Wished To Sing by
 Malcolm Pro. Touring ACT primary schools
 March to July

CANNBERRA THEATRE (07 1550)

Lambert Theatre Trust/OCW Laidback/Leeds Festival Centre Trust
Why Not Stay For Breakfast? by Gene Stone
 and Ray Cusack with Daniel Nemei and
 Helen Giff. To 17 March
*Project Theatre Company/Claudio Mackay
 Enterprises*
The English Kitchen
The Ground Floor 20 March (plus matinee 31
 March)
Smith and Smith 20 March
The Luscious Lover and Pen 21 March (plus
 matinee 22 March)

FLATBUSH (07 1620)

Cannberra Theatre music Society
The Sound of Music by Rogers and
 Hammerstein. Return Season 1 to 10 March

THEATRE 107 4223

Cannberra Repertory
Quasi Fish Sea and Pity by Pam Goss. Director,
 Anne Gough-Smith. 7 to 31 March,
 Wednesdays to Saturdays
For more contact Margaret Wells on 49-1182

NEW SOUTH WALES

ALFORD/STAMPART (02 1646)

Orchids by William Shakespeare. Phone theatre
 for production details

ARTS COUNCIL OF NSW (02 6611)

Jeannette Plant. Leda Water. *Savannah* (and
 throughout Feb). School Drama. *Savannah*, Arts
 Hood, Jean Carter. Dale Woodward. Bob
 Pillemer. Disco/Concert. *Shirley Ball*

AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Opera Theatre. *Les Sylphides* and *Ophelia*. From
 23 March. Sat Mar 1 2pm

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (02 1208)

Opera Theatre. *Alcina*. *Symphony of Nazarene* by
 Wagner. 1, 3 March at 8pm

Les Sylphides, and *Prologue of Persuence* GAB. 7, 8
 9, 10 March 7.15pm, Sat Mar 10 March 1 3pm
Concert Hall. *Alcina* 2 March 7.15pm
Alcina by Wagner. 20 March with ARL
 concert version in English

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (02 8677)

Last of the Red Hot Lovers by Neil Simon.
 Director, Jon Erving, with Brenda Culligan,
 Maggie Dwyer, Lar Harris, Len Kierman.
 Commencing
Ensemble at the Sables ring 819-8877 for
 details

FRANK STRAITS BULL NUGGET (07 4628)

Back in the Old Bush director, George
 Candra with Noel Druphy, Barbara Wyndson
 Garth Ingham. Helen Lawrence and Piel Wynne

GENESIA THEATRE (02 5623)

The Anniversary by Patricia Marshall, director,
 Raymond Aitkenworth

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 3411)

Secret Circle. Roy Linderson. Commencing

KIRRIHILL PUPPETHATRE (02 1415)

The Jungle Show by Paul Chubb. Francis Ward
 and Richmond Young

LIS CURRIE PRESENTATIONS (08 5076)

Shirley Ardison. Traditional bush ballads
 (minstrel, primary and secondary schools in NW,
 Hunter, W and Riverina districts)
Modern After Theatre touring minstrel, primary
 and secondary schools in Sydney metropolitan
 area To 23 March

MABIAN STREET THEATRE (08 3160)

The Murder Show by Jack Sharkey, director,
 Peter Windsor with Joan Bruce, Philip Huxton,
 Brandon Burke, Tim McCulloch, Louise Le Nap
 and Elaine Lee To 19 March
For Them Table by Alan Ayckbourn. From 20
 March

MADISONITE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA

(027 1638)
Puppet Power. NSW Schools Tour, director,
 Richard Shawlow

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT

(08 5523)
Love in the Dark written and directed by Stanley
 Walsh, with Ron Hurlbut, Alan Wilson, Karen
 Johnson and Elaine Carter

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (07 6185)

On Jupiter written by Henry Samuels. John
 McKellar and Peggy Morrison, director,
 William Orr

NEW THEATRE (02 1488)

Ready Steady. Director, Dick Diamond. Friday,
 Sat. Sun commencing

NINE DO THEATRE (09 5003)

Melissa Bay by Alan Bean, director. Ken
 Hunter. To 4 March

Rooney and Julet by Shakespeare, director,
 John Bell, with Angela French, Mel Gibson,
 Drew Farnby and Kerry Walker. From 16
 March

Downstairs. *Marceline's Last Half Hour* by
 Haroldine Williams. Hurtle production,
 director, George Marshall, with Bruce Miles.
 To 18 March

The Desert from the Bush from the writings of
 Henry Lawson, director, Rodney Fisher, with
 Robin Ramsay. From 17 March

O THEATRE, Penrith (02 21 5700)

Who the Other Half Loves by Alan Ayckbourn,
 director. Arthur Galla, with Bill Cline, Alan
 Bell. Kevin Jackson and Judy Davis. Penrith 7
 23 March. Penrith from 28 March

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Recording Hall. *Euroz Energy Dance Co* 21
 30 March

ROCKS PLAYERS (02 1761)

151 Bridge Road. *Giles*
Peter Fordell. *The Bookish Poet*. *The
 Wandering*. *Old Times* and *The Dark Winter*
in Landscape or Night. In repertory 1, 10 March
Late Night Show. Selections of Peter's poems,
 three nights, narrative biography and set
 plays 7pm and late 11.30pm

SHROPTON THEATRE FOR YOUNG

PEOPLE (08 1948)
 Free drama workshops on Sets and Suits (10.30)

Including playbuilding, mime, dance, sculpture,
 puppetry, radio and video

SYDNEY CENTRE (02 3533)

You! Theatre. *The Kingfisher* by William
 Douglas Home, director, George Ogden, with
 Gossie Waters, John McCulloch and Frank
 Thong

Evening. *Project at the Old Pa*. *Good English*
Evenings. Presented by Project Theatre
 Company with Derek Jacobs, Timothy West,
 Ian Platt and Julian Glover. 18-17 March

STATE THEATRE COMPANY INTERIM

PROGRAMME (09 9122)
Drama Theatre, *Opera House*
The Lady of the Cambray by Dumas. Film
 adapted by Louis Mouri and Rex Compton
 with Kate Fitzpatrick and Kate Archer.
 Depanne. To 24 March

THEATRE SOCIETY (02 1111)

The Red Boy by Terence Rattigan. Director,
 Lindsay Anderson with Rachel
 Roberts and Wallace Eaton. To 4 March
An Evening with Dave Allen 17 March
Goodbye by Ian Louis, director, Michael
 Blumstein with Ruby Wiles and Gene Olson.
 From 19 March

20 PLAYHOUSE (09 6804)

Broken to the Black Swamp. John Howard with the
 160 players. From and Sat only
Being along Along. 160 Players in music with
 the 160 Players. Children's play Sat only
 12 noon from 3 March

For review contact Cindy Baker on 377 1260

QUEENSLAND

ARTS THEATRE (06 2144)

Antonia by Marcello Mastroni, director,
 Joseph Debonato. To 24 March
Nightlight by Judith Fischer, director, Jean
 Welling. Opera 29 March
Shining. SW (Children's) Theatre by Peter
 Pearce and Don Beyer, director, Eric Hall.
 Open 1 March

BRISBANE ACTORS COMPANY in Twelfth

Night Theatre (02 7842)
Scripted based on Melrose, director, David
 Clondinning, with Michael McCulloch, Neil
 Winder. 16c Hamilton, Steve Hamilton, Penny
 Winder. 8-24 March

CAMERATA (06 656)

The Father by August Strindberg, director, Fred
 Woolley, with Brian Ragg and Emerald Wood.
 From 1 March

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 2775)

Bedroom Fever by Alan Ayckbourn, director
 Peter Williams, with Barry Cryer, Pat
 McDonald, Kerry Maquett, Belinda Giblin and
 Gail Potts. To 17 March

Australian Opera. *Norma* by Bellini starring
 Ross Sutherland, producer, Sandra Scott
 conductor, Richard Stoppard, designer, Pamela
 Mariani. From 13 March

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY

(02 5177)

Bedroom Fever by Kenneth Ross, director,
 John Krummel, designer, Fiona Reilly, with
 Donald McDonald, Kerry Maquett, John
 Clayton, Reginald Giblin, En Taylor. From 14
 March

LA ROUTE 16 IS 1629

Jack Sire by John Bradley, director, Scott McE To 3 March

Three Angels by Ned Coward, director, Ellen Houston, designer, David Bell, with Kay Perry, Elaine Rose To 9 March

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (02) 3900
The Thompson and *All Over Jazz* director, Douglas Hodge, with John Parram, Graeme Robertson and Greg Radford. Touring from 21 March

For entries contact Don Mitchell on 365 6678

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ALICE IN THOAT 52

The Police Commissioner's Grandmother by John Napier, director, Bob Knight To 21 March

LITTLE PATCH THEATRE at Bakara Theatre
A Splint of Yellow Director, Merna Jones To 10 March
The Devils/Promises for 4-9 year olds To 16 March

MAFFRAY LIGHT OPERA

Goodwood Institute, Cornwell, producer, 08 March 9:24 March

Q THEATRE (03) 640

Under the Skin by Dylan Thomas, director, Joan Marshall To 21 March

ST RUDOLPH'S

In Jack Hall *The Diary of Anne Frank* director, Judy Mann, designer, Jill Smith To 11 March

STATE OPERA OF SA (01) 614

The Pirates by John Strauss as English To 16 March

STATE THEATRE COMPANY (01) 511

Hearts by William Shakespeare, director, Colin George, designer, Hugh Coleman, with Michael Salfrey. Complete run to 3 March, cut version 4-24 March
American Buffalo by David Mamet, director, Nick Enright To March 12 April

For entries contact Chris Johns on 212 6670

TASMANIA

POLYGON THEATRE COMPANY (01) 6999

at Ruffian Restaurant, Battery Point (01) 7134
Old World Babylon featuring, Ron Jones, a rehearsed musical version of the Fiddlers' story. Directed and created by Don Gay, musical director, Bruce Carleton. From 16 March

TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (01) 9966

Playbox Theatre, Melbourne, *Rob a duck and Duck*, Peter Wilson To 9 March
The North Wind and the Sun at outdoor show, written and directed by Peter Wilson To 12 March

THEATRE ROYAL (04) 6260

Down the Highway by Kaye Ryton, director, Peter Williams, with Jane Saker To 3 March
While the Billy Boats with Leonard Teale
Lyle Opera Company, New Haven, from 28 March

For entries contact the editorial office on 0486 67 4470

VICTORIA

ALEXANDER THEATRE (03) 2029

Side Rags English music from 17-20 March, then on tour throughout Victoria. Presented by

the Arts Council of Victoria in conjunction with the Festival of Perth

Musique for Musicians by Shakespeare, Alexander Theatre Co, director, Malcolm Robertson from March

ARENA CHILDREN'S THEATRE (04) 9671

Plans in performance. Secondary schools. Microcomputer and Company

Company One

Upper Secondary — *Shoguns* by Edward Albee. Directed and created by Peter Taitch
Lower Secondary — *Mr Who Would Say 'Yes'* or *No* based on ideas of Bertolt Brecht. Directed and created by Peter Taitch

Company Two

Upper Secondary — *Plagues* by Brian Friel. Directed and created by Peter Taitch
Lower Secondary — *First Plagues and His Fight Against the Darkness* by Elmer Gray. Directed and created by Peter Taitch

S.C.T. — *Seaside Activity Theatre* — One weekender drama experience. *Toddler's Quest* by Stephen Walker

Arts Theatre Community Activities

Youth Theatre Group To 10 10:00 p.m.
Middle, Women's Theatre Group To 10 10:00 p.m.

To 10 Tuesday, Saturday Morning Classes 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. 1:15 to 2:00 p.m.

Music Company, The Great American Book Store. Musical by Bill Kelly and Donald Ward To 10 March to 14 May

An Evening with a Composer — Robert Green To 10 March to 13 & 30 March

ARTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (03) 6119

Primary Schools Program. *Just Making the Grade* by Ian Crichton, director, John Wigg. Secondary Schools Program. *Modern Music* by Michael Freedland

On tour in SA, *Five Funny Folk*. Sets from the Brothers Grimm. Adapted and directed by Don Mackay

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP

08AM-12PM 10:00-11:15

Producers: a Sonar. *Mokey's Mokeys* by John Korman, director, Alan Robertson. Rock Theatre. *Reverend Blackbird* 4-10 March

COMEDY THEATRE (03) 4993

Overseas created by Hamilton Deane and John L. Balderston, director, Robert Helpmann, scenery and costumes designed by Edward Goss, starring John Warren, Max March, David Ravenwood, Leah Rawles and company

CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE (03) 6740

Community-based theatre working at schools, libraries, and community centres. *The Green*

FLYING TRAPPE CAFE (01) 3125

FOURIES Theatre Restaurant (04) 2769
Presented at All Nations Original comedy entertainment with Rod Quarmack and company. Shows. Shows from 17 March

HOPLA THEATRE FOUNDATION

613 Toad Theatre Theatre, Devonport
Jewell Taylor, Sophie Gustaf, Sandra

Christina in *Wooden Music* To 3 March
Candace only by Eve Marston, director,

Gwynne Sheppard, starring John McGowan, Anne Phelan, Barry Robson, Aaron Murray, Evelyn Kope and Marilyn Rogers. From 16 March

Upstart Theatre

Derry Lavin by Tom Soppard, director, Murray Copland, starring Bill Naylor, Paul Tappin, Frank Gallagher, Amanda Macgregor, Paula Beuch, Robin Canning and Henry Bick. To 3 March

The High and the Mighty Show, starring

Margaret Roadknight and Bob Heddon. To 10 March

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (03) 3111

Anne Director, George and Ethel Miers, starring Hays Gordon and Jill Prynne. Continues

LAST LAUGH Theatre Restaurant (04) 9126

LA MAMA (03) 457790 6085

The Bride's Song written and directed by Barry Dainton with Jill Foster. Tour. Sun To 11 March

Run Run Away by Robert Knobel, directed by John Wally, with Amanda Gordon Brown and Maggie Miller. From 15 March, Tour. Sun

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

054 4600

Reverend's Theatre directed by James Saunders, director, Bruce Myers, designer, Steve Nelson, featuring Anne Haddy, Jennifer Hays, Susan Chivers and Michael Edgar. To 17 March

Microcomputer by Frank Kiffin, adapted, directed and designed by Steve Portoff

Normal Theatre production. From 21 March
Afternoon Theatre *James's End* by R. C. Storrill, director, Nick Rogers, designer, Tony Trigg, featuring Robina McGowan, Anthony

Melville, Ian Lockridge, and company. To 17 March

Arlequins by W. Shakespeare, director, John Sumner, designer, Tanya McCallin. From 15 March

Travesty production directed by Judith Alexander. production of size or uncon-

ventional. *Arlequins* or *Arlequins* plays

Youth Work classes directed by Stephanie Mignot

Also School Theatre Project. George Robertson to 10 March and Company two theatre program

OLD MILL, Cooching 052 31 1440
Centre Centre of Denison University. Regular evening productions

PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE (03) 6696

First Play written and directed by Croesus Bear. Performed daily for schools, also Sun 2:00 pm

POLYGLYPH PUPPETS (04) 1512

Multi-cultural puppet shows with Muggs the Cat and Friends. Visiting schools and community centres

PRINCESS THEATRE (03) 3911

Victorian State Opera production of *The Pears*. Produced by Robert Leverage and created by Richard Daniel

Chorus Memorial director, Peter Williams, with Jane Saker. From 12 March

PALACE THEATRE (04) 6658

Australian Opera production of *Puccini's La Bohème* and Verdi's *La Traviata*. To 14 March

TIGER AND JOHN'S THEATRE Lounge (03) 1754

Web Talk and John Newman. Myrtle Roberts, Van Gordon, and guest artists

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (01) 5611

The Pears. Produced by Robert Leverage and created by Richard Daniel

Chorus Memorial director, Peter Williams, with Jane Saker. From 12 March

WALLS THEATRE (04) 6658

Australian Opera production of *Puccini's La Bohème* and Verdi's *La Traviata*. To 14 March

TIGER AND JOHN'S THEATRE Lounge (03) 1754

Web Talk and John Newman. Myrtle Roberts, Van Gordon, and guest artists

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (01) 5611

The Pears. Produced by Robert Leverage and created by Richard Daniel

Chorus Memorial director, Peter Williams, with Jane Saker. From 12 March

Major Amateur Theatre Companies

Below are listed these theatres in the evening for further details

BASIN TRUSS & CO GROUP No 1002

CLAYTON THEATRE GROUP 039 379 1920

HERBERT RICHIE 49 2282

MALVERN THEATRE CO. 361 0026
PUMPHINSTOWN LITTLE THEATRE
528-4267
MILK THEATRE, 796-6624

For details contact Les Conwright on 781 1771

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT 071 0193
Five Four 76 Director: Max Day. Continuing.

DOLPHIN THEATRE 075 3399
Some Good Food from History: none by Pina Baus. To 18 March

HAYMAN THEATRE 050 7006
The Wife of the World by Company, director: Raynold Gracie. To 18 March

HOLD ON THE WALL 081 3483
Alexander Reef by Alexander Breen with Robert van Marckenberg, director: Edgar Mitchell, director: Bill Dore. To 10 March
After Magnolia by Tom Stoppard with Robert van Marckenberg, director: Edgar Mitchell, director: Bill Dore. To 3 March
Good With Me by David Allen, director: Colum McColl. 14 March 14 April

NATIONAL THEATRE 052 5500
Playhouse: Night and Day by Tom Stoppard, director: Stephen Barry, director: Sam Russell with Homer Blackman. To 3 March
Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, director: Stephen Barry, with Warren Marshall. 21 March

OCTAGON THEATRE 025 1186
Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare, National Theatre Co. director: John Bell, director: Krassimir Fyodorov. with Angela French. Mel Gibson. Each March

REGAL THEATRE 081 1577
Theater in Paper: Your King's coronation. To 15 March

SUNSHINE GARDENS 015 3399
Punch and Judy, The Frog Prince. Save Horses the Puppet Man. To 10 March

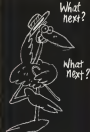
SWA BALLET COMPANY 033-8189
Sunday Club Production at Kunzang Cultural Centre. 18 March

SWA OPERA COMPANY 028-4111
Opera in Concert at Perth Concert Hall. Conductor: Alan Abbott. 13 March

For details contact Joan Ambrose on 299 6677

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THESPIA'S PRIZE CROSSWORD No 9

Name

Address

Answers

1. No more round the North to England (10)
2. Not as home in the season for growing (9)
3. "Little Albert" is complete (10)
4. Dear person with lower clothing (10)
5. Blurred brow, and upside right to scientist (10)
6. Mail sent out to President (9)
7. "that singer" whose formal, dark with my hair" (10)
8. Cupid gives us a silly word (10)
9. Cool and tough, what a fish — with an intention — it's a performer (10)
10. Users' book, Roman coming in the South (10)
11. "I met my beauty and did not (Which I desired, and got, was but a of this" (10)
12. An explosion to rest (10)
13. Pagan has a laugh with the ruler, a genius (10)
14. Can Street be gold (10)

Clues

1. See bonus down 21 country (10)
2. Hole, like Dunsin's a very quiet house (10)
3. Soft consciousness in the cat's paw (10)
4. Burning, casual, is well worth having (10)
5. An explosion to rest (10)
6. Joe Frensh and the German below (10)
7. After dinner, sleep (10)
8. I want in order to teach (10)
9. Martin in his official robes (10)
10. Repeat, endlessly, checked, gives us study to become an actor (10)
11. Chemical powder offered by god in a casket (10)
12. Contradict, most boy good (10)
13. The way Don's arranged (10)

The first correct entry drawn on March 25th will receive one year's free subscription to T&A

Last month's answers:

Last month's winner was Mrs. Marie White, Ryde, NSW

